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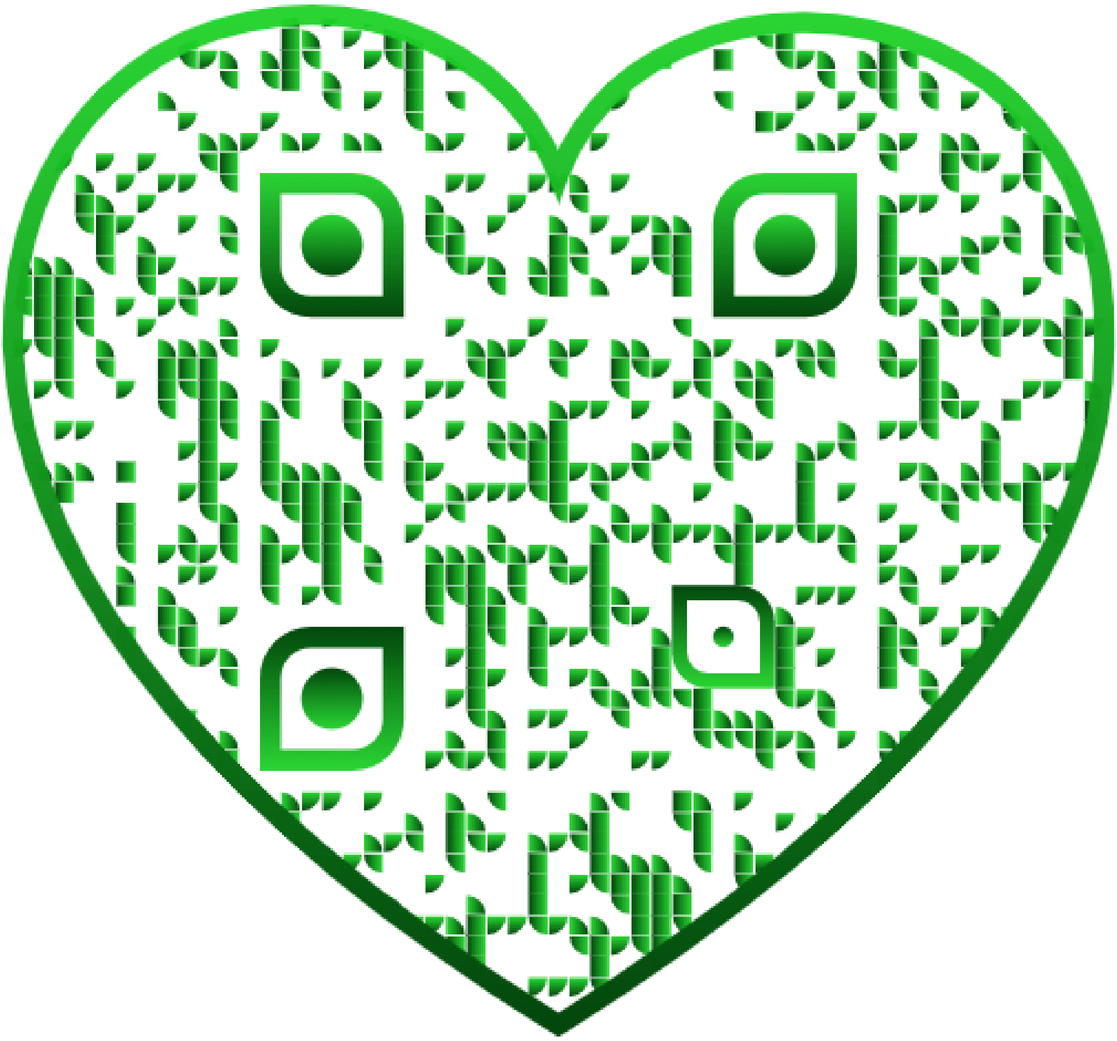

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038
300cc TWO-STROKE HARD ENDURO SHOOTOUT
7 BIKES, 5 TESTERS, 1 WINNER. WE PIT THE BEST 300S AGAINST EACH OTHER!

August 2025

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CELEBRATING
australasian DIRT BIKE
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ISSUE #550
AUGUST 2025
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50, NOT OUT!

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS AND 550 ISSUES OF ADB – AUSTRALIA'S ORIGINAL, UNAPOLOGETIC VOICE FOR ALL DIRTBIKE RIDERS.

IF YOU'D TOLD Geoff Eldridge and Ray Ryan back in 1975 – when they cracked a flagon of red in Ray's Revesby backyard and vowed to fix the sorry state of dirtbike coverage – that their scrappy start-up would still be at it half a century later, they'd have laughed you out of the yard. Yet here we are: 550 issues deep, 50 years young and still roosting as hard as ever.

That first $1 issue of *ADB* landed on newsstands after the Mr Motocross final. Printed on paper a cut above the rest, it was sprinkled with colour pages and a heavy dose of irreverence. The early issues had shootouts, tech yarns and, as always, GE's tongue-in-cheek 'Reflections' column, which usually stirred the pot. It was bold, honest and gloriously anti-BS. Readers lapped it up, and an Australian institution was born.

What's happened since? Everything. We've chronicled every era – twin shocks, fuel injection, alloy frames, EFI and now electric dirtbikes. We've helped push the sport forward, from campaigning for an Aussie ISDE team to Thumper Nats, publicising Finke, A4DE, Kamfari, Hattah and every backyard pony express in between. We've broken stories, broken bikes and occasionally broken bones in the pursuit of the perfect test. We've mourned legends like GE himself in '93 and Ray in '04, and we've welcomed new generations – Reed, Price, the Lawrences, Milner and Sanders – first revealed in these very pages.

Through it all, *ADB* has shape-shifted. We've been bi-monthly, monthly, phone-book thick and COVID-lean.

IT WAS BOLD, HONEST AND GLORIOUSLY ANTI-BS. READERS LAPPED IT UP, AND AN AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTION WAS BORN

We've changed owners, layouts, logos and editors – each leaving tyre tracks of their own – but we've never lost that founding brief: give Aussie dirtbike riders the coverage they deserve in an informative, entertaining manner minus the spin.

Print, of course, isn't the only show in town any more. Your thumbs now do what ink once did: scroll tests on your phone, watch launches on YouTube, listen to podcasts and binge photo galleries on Insta. We're there, too: adbmag.com.au is flying; our video reviews and bike-build series are clocking serious minutes; and our socials let us break news as it happens (and cop your feedback within seconds). The medium has changed – the mission hasn't.

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So why celebrate 550? Because in an age where magazines flicker like TikTok clips, longevity matters. Fifty years proves that proper journalism, sharp photography and a little larrikin spirit still resonate. It proves that the Australian dirtbike scene – your scene – is worth documenting in high resolution and high detail. It proves that a kid in a shed, thumbing through back issues for jetting specs, can still fall in love with the sport the way we did when we were kids.

Mostly, though, it's a salute to the tribe. To our readers, from the OGs to the groms devouring their first mag right now. To the industry – manufacturers, dealers, distributors and advertisers who back us even when the economy gets squirrelly. To our contributors – the race-hardened journos, lens magicians, testers, tuners and tireless subs who still argue over comma placement at 1am. And of course to the riders – pros and privateers who let us ride, dyno, disassemble and sometimes highside their pride and joy for the sake of a good story.

Geoff used to keep a bar fridge in the office stocked with beer and cabanossi. Legend has it he'd prop his boots up on the desk after deadline, crack a can and toast the team. Tonight, wherever he is, I like to think he's doing the same – grinning at issue 550, proud that the mag he and Ray dreamed up is still the dirtbike riders bible.

Here's to the next 50.

australasian
DIRT BIKE

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ISSN: 1320-2103

Published by Citrus Media Digital PO Box 222, Earlwood NSW 2206. The trade mark Australasian Dirt Bike (ADB) is owned by Citrus Media Australia Holdings and is used under licence.

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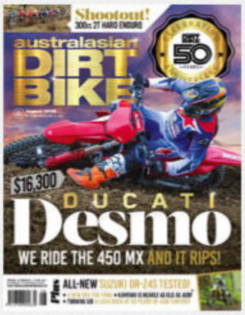

ON THE COVER

Geoff Braico tests the all-new Ducati Desmo450 MX and we celebrate 50 years of *ADB* in our 550th issue!
Photo: Alex Photo

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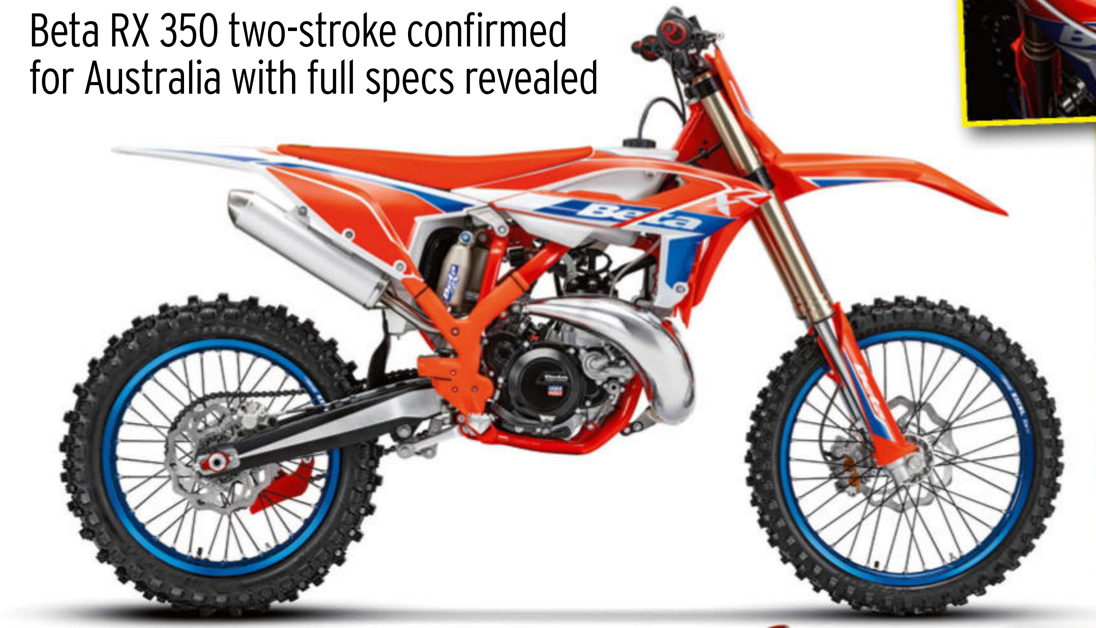
BETA RX 350 2T OZ BOUND!

Beta RX 350 two-stroke confirmed for Australia with full specs revealed



BETA HAS officially released detailed information on its all-new MY26 RX 350 2T motocrosser, confirming the bike will arrive in Australia this October. After first unveiling the model at EICMA last year and showcasing it in prototype form at the Champions Charity Race with Australian MotoGP legend Casey Stoner at the helm, Beta has now confirmed the RX 350 will go into full production – marking a bold move into uncharted territory for a modern two-stroke motocross machine.

Replacing the outgoing RX 300, the RX 350 introduces a completely new engine platform with a dual-spark cylinder head, a unique power-valve system and unique piston and crankshaft dimensions. Beta says the dual-spark design is intended to deliver smoother combustion, helping produce a more linear power curve more reminiscent of a four-stroke, while retaining the lightweight simplicity and snappy response of a two-stroke.

The 349cc engine runs a 73.6mm stroke crankshaft and is paired with a five-speed gearbox, geared at 13/47 final drive. The engine cases, internals and exhaust system – including a larger internal silencer diameter – are all new and specific to the 350 platform. Beta says this configuration offers broader torque and improved manageability across all rev ranges, targeting riders who want both punch and ease of use in a race-capable package.

While the RX 350 leads the charge, it's part of a broader expansion of Beta's motocross program for 2026. The company has also announced the production release of the all-new RX 250 2T, a high-revving, lightweight option designed to compete in the 250cc class, and a heavily updated RX 450 4T, which benefits from a redesigned cylinder head, new intake and exhaust components, and engine refinements aimed at improving torque delivery and rider comfort.

All three models in the RX range share a reinforced frame with a cast-in brace around the steering head, a lightweight aluminium subframe and KYB suspension – a 48mm fork and 50mm rear shock – set up specifically for motocross use. Nissin brakes with Galfer discs (260mm front, 240mm rear) are fitted as standard, and all models come equipped with electric start, a lithium battery, non O-ring chain and two selectable engine maps. The RX 450 4T additionally features four levels of traction control.

Beta has confirmed the RX 350 2T will be available in Australia from October, with pricing to be announced closer to the arrival date.

REVEALED

2026 KTM 450 RALLY REPLICA

KTM has a new version of its rally bike and it's even bringing out a Daniel Sanders Edition!

KTM HAS announced two small-batch rally machines for the 2026 model year: 150 units of the 450 Rally Replica and an additional five units of a 450 Rally Replica Sanders Edition. Both bikes will be hand-built at KTM's motorsport facility in Austria and sold through authorised dealers on a first-come basis.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Core package (Rally Replica)

- **Engine and drivetrain:** 450cc fuel-injected SOHC single, six-speed gearbox, KTM hydraulic clutch.
- **Cooling:** Dual radiators.
- **Frame:** Laser-cut, hydro-formed steel cradle; die-cast aluminium swing-arm. KTM claims the construction improves straight-line stability and energy absorption.
- **Fuel load:** Three tanks (two front, one rear) for a combined 34.5L.
- **Suspension:** WP XACT Pro 48mm closed-cartridge Cone Valve fork (CNC 23mm offset triple clamps with in-house PHDS bar mounts and Scotts damper) and WP XACT Pro 7750 shock, both fully adjustable.
- **Electrics and cockpit:** Carbon-fibre nav tower, LED lighting, KTM rally dashboard, digital road-book mounts.
- **Exhaust:** Akrapovič titanium system supplied as standard.

Sanders Edition (five units only)

The Sanders Edition carries the same mechanical package but adds:

- Factory Red Bull livery and individually numbered frame badge (001-005).
- Signed Daniel Sanders graphics and fuel caps, Hinson clutch cover, carbon chain sliders, titanium footpegs and laser-engraved Akrapovič pipe.
- Factory wheelset with Michelin rally tyres plus a second set with street-legal rubber.
- Factory brake discs, two tank-pad height options, Selle Dalla Valle seat and extra windshield customised with the buyer's name.
- A Sanders-signed race jersey and a VIP slot at the 25-29 August 2025 KTM Europe Adventure Rally in Romania, where KTM will supply a team truck, mechanic and the chance to ride with Sanders himself.

KTM says the Replica's latest frame and suspension geometry have been a work in progress since Marc Coma, Matthias Walkner, Toby Price, Kevin Benavides and now Daniel Sanders. The current generation debuted at the 2025 Dakar, where Sanders won outright and Edgar Canet topped Rally2; Emanuel Gyenes also won the 'Original by Motul' class on the same platform.

Dealers are taking orders now. KTM has not published pricing or delivery dates. The company stresses the bikes are intended for serious cross-country rally competitors and are not homologated for general road use.

KTM FINDS INVESTOR

KTM gets in tighter with Indian company Bajaj

KTM HAS announced a major milestone: after months of dedicated effort and strategic planning, the KTM AG was able to expand its relationship with its long-standing partner Bajaj and secure it as a main investor. Here's what Gottfried Neumeister, CEO, KTM AG had to say:

"Today we have been given the opportunity to continue the history of KTM. Together with our long-standing partner Bajaj, we were able to work out a strategy that will enable us to raise a further 600 million euros for our new start in addition to the 200 million euros already made available. The existing sites – in particular our main plant in Mattighofen/Munderfing – will remain the basis for our future success. This means that we will continue to be an important employer for the entire region.

"In view of this new, second opportunity, we at KTM feel deep gratitude and humility towards all those within and outside our group of companies who have made it possible. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Stefan Pierer on behalf of all those who have accompanied us along the way. He laid the foundation for one of the world's best-known motorcycle brands, which has a unique community."

More details to follow.

KOVE IS COMING TO OZ!

An Aussie distributor for KOVE Motorcycles has been announced

KOVE MOTORCYCLES is officially launching in Australia and New Zealand through sister company distributor TSM Enterprises who currently distributes Thumpstar. TSM has more than 20 years of experience in the industry.

At the moment, the bikes are going through compliance and preparations. The plan is to have the motocross models available before the end of 2025, with road models launching from 2026.

You can view the video of the official KOVE launch Down Under on our website at adbmag.com.au/editorial/kove-is-coming-to-australia/.

Your Shout

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CONGRATULATIONS

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SHOT
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MOUTH OF THE MONTH

DOUBLE PLUGGER

Hi Mitch,

I made issue #500 and am looking to make issue #550!

What is with the sudden fascination with the BETA 300 Twin Plug head?

Back in my student days, my best bike was the Suzuki TS 250 J with a twin plug head. You had better check with Mr Grumpy Jack as it featured in the dinosaurus column in issue #549. Okay, it didn't run twin coils to fire each plug so I ran a decompressor in the spare hole to improve braking (on the tar) and scare the odd pedestrian while approaching traffic lights as the sound was a bit exhausting (sic).

The TS was my tourer complete with tankbag, saddlebags and spare fuel tank. I later updated to the XT500C which had the odd run at Nindigully (no less)

More exciting still was my time at Condo around 1982, with my new KDX 175, pictured at the Mount Tilga track, and both transport modes being the Holden ute and trailer.

Lastly the KDX 175 from issue #500 is alive and well (and registered) with a bush mechanic's plastic tank weld to deal with a crack after 45 years of service. Lovely to read the story of Al Gillard and I have a few years to go to catch up being a spring chicken at 68.

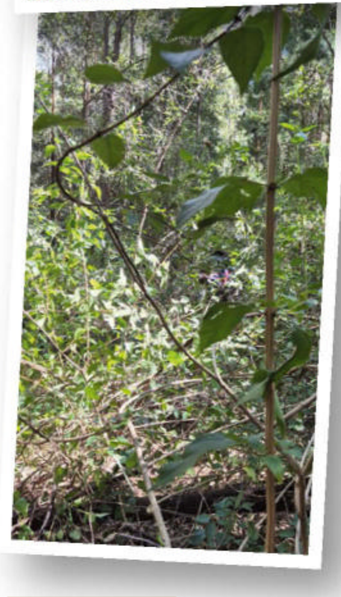
A tribute to Al goes like: "We don't stop riding when we are too old, we are too old when we stop riding."

Cheers Gentlemen
Myles Humphries (MH)

Good to hear from you again, Myles. Grumpy Jack! Brilliant – that's gonna stick now.

Yeah, Wazza has pointed out the twin head in the past. It's not new tech but it works better than the single plug in the stock model Beta and we love it.

And Al might just be the most popular trail rider in Australia – we've had so many people email us who know him.



THANKS AL

I'd just like to share my appreciation for this legend. After being off a bike for 10 years, I bit the bullet and got a WR250F.

My wife met Al through our local post office in Moonee Beach and he came

around to the butcher shop where I work and we set up a ride. In the short time we have been riding together he has taught me so much about the places in my own backyard – they are unbelievable. Al is an absolute legend. Here's a picture from our last ride together.

Cheers,
Josh Bertram

That's an awesome story Josh. The Legend of Al Gillard continues to grow! We've been inundated with people who knew him and have been encouraged by him. What a fantastic bloke.

THE GHOST CONTACT

Hi guys,

Reading the latest (July 2025) *ADB* and you have a letter to the editor from Ghost Racewear.

I have tried to search for them and the only result was a listing on BING for a company based at Silverdale (with links to YouTube videos) and with an address and a mobile number. However, when I rang the number listed it was to an electrical company who had no idea about Ghost Racewear. I also rang the contact mobile listed for your magazine and got through to your former employee who left more than two years ago.

1. Do you have any other info about this Ghost Racewear and how they might be contacted?

2. Can you please let me know if I can get in touch with them?

Thanks,

Ian Bruce
Blayney Motorcycles

Hi Ian, Thanks for reaching out. For many of our other readers who have been asking, try emailing Dean to get in touch with Ghost Racewear. ghostracewear@gmail.com

300CC SHOOTOUT VIDEO?

Hey guys,

Where can I watch the video of the 300cc two-stroke enduro shootout that's featured in issue #549.

Kieran Osullivan

Hi Kieran, the video is now live on our YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/@ADBMagazine) and on our website (adbmag.com.au) so you can watch all the behind the scenes action of the most anticipated shootout in Australia.

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DANIEL SANDERS

CHUCKY'S CHALLENGE

HECTIC SCHEDULE

RACING IN AFRICA AND PARTYING IN AUSTRIA

WELL, UNFORTUNATELY I missed out on last month's issue, so we've got a fair bit to catch up on. It was a solid month overseas with not a single day off. I think the biggest gap in my schedule was three hours – and I just slept that whole time!

We first flew over to Spain to do some roadbook training, to get familiar with the bike again. It just helps you get into the rhythm quicker, especially if you want to lead out the race in front of the pack. It was only a quick five days before the team jumped on a plane down to Johannesburg, South Africa.

It was my first time in the country, and it was really nice to see. Once we got out to Sun City, where Race 3 was, we checked out a wildlife park and all the large animals.

The race went really well for me, except for the first day. At kilometre 11, I got lost, as did a lot of other riders. What threw me off was the style of the roadbook. We knew it was going to be a different race – not your open desert style – so you had to be super focused. One tricky part I learned that day was that the drawings and directions in the roadbook weren't as accurate as what we use at Dakar. You had to just freestyle some parts that didn't make sense and hope the next note lined up which, thankfully, they mostly did. Sometimes the next note might be 500m away.

There were a lot of animals and farms to pass through, heaps of fences and crops. It actually reminded me of what we could do around the Mildura area – wheat fields, bushland – just minus the sand. I rode solid the whole time, felt in the groove and stayed in my rhythm.

Once we wrapped up the rally and took the victory, it was straight back to Austria for my Dakar Party with the whole company. It was such a positive time – great to share stories, and surreal to see people from 10 years ago who were there when I first started. Some of those workers have watched my progress from an Australian enduro rider to a Dakar Rally Champion – all with one brand!

> AFTER THAT SILLY MISTAKE, I KNUCKLED DOWN, PUSHED HARD, AND STAYED LASER-FOCUSED

I got to see and sign my five Sanders replica bikes – which has never been done before. The team did a great job designing the bikes to look like my racebike, complete with custom parts. Unreal.

After that hectic day, it was straight to Erzberg, where I caught up with heaps of Aussies and watched some of my mates race. I also raced – just the prologue. For me, it was more of a media weekend with Red Bull and KTM.

Racing the prologue was a fun experience. I only got to ride the bike for 10 minutes before I had to race – so I just had to send it. Third place was okay, though I made one decent mistake running off track. The competition was stiff, especially from the Enduro GP boys.

Once we wrapped up the race, it was straight back to Salzburg for the Hangar 7 opening – a private Red Bull party. I was part of the show alongside a bunch of Red Bull athletes. I got to do a drag race on a live airport runway. They shut down the strip for an hour so we could rip on it. I tapped out at 170km/h, which didn't quite compete with the F1 car and the MotoGP bike.

I finally made it home after an action-packed 31 days!

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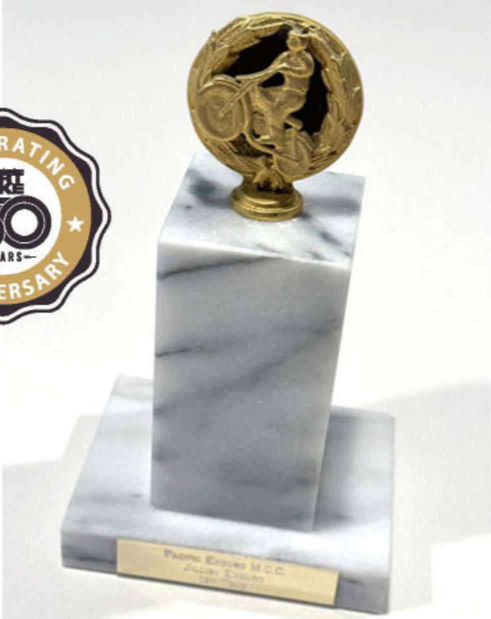

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ANDREW "CLUBBY" CLUB

EDITOR'S NOTE

TROPHY TIME!

ADB'S OLDEST LIVING EDITOR, ANDREW CLUB, TELLS OF HIS ONE AND ONLY TROPHY

ONE STORY? From my years as Editor of *ADB*? That's a big ask, Mitch. There are so many good stories from my two stints behind the *ADB* Editor's desk in the late 1980s, and then again in the mid 1990s after GE's tragic death at the Nevada Rally. But one that has always replayed in my memory so clearly over the 40 years since it took place was when I had only been at *ADB* for a year, in 1985.

I'd been hired into the *ADB* Editorial Dream Team alongside GE, Honest Muz and designer Jeff Keen, and I got the job for my writing and photography skills, not as a dirtbike racer. But before I knew it, I'd been drafted into racing a Pony Express at Jilliby, as team mate to H Muz.

Muz, and GE, were enduro racers of some repute in the day, so I was crapping my Tycon jeans like a black dog about riding shotgun with Muz.

And then when Muz, as was his way, didn't get a bike organised in time for the race, he barked: "Doesn't matter Clubby, we'll race your XR!"

'My XR' was a Honda XR250RE, it was pretty new, and it was my pride and joy. And that day at Jilliby it copped a hiding like it had never endured before, and never did again.

Anyway, I duly fronted at Jilliby, and I remember Muz looking down his nose with derision at 'my' flash red rocket, as this was the *ADB* era of all four-stroke dirt bikes being nothing but overweight and underpowered slugs.

Expectations certainly weren't high as Muz fronted the starter of the Pacific Enduro Motorcycle Club's pony express, but from the minute the flag dropped, and the poor little thumper started valve-bouncing under Muz's merciless caning of the throttle, clutch and gearbox, it was on... game on!

The loop started at Jilliby motocross track, then carved up into the surrounding hillsides of the Watagans, the course dominated by logging lanes overgrown with lantana and singletrack, punctuated by steaming brown bogs at the base of every valley.

Astonishingly, Muz was ripping on the little red rooster and peeled off three or four laps before he finally handed the bike over to me: "Just get it back in one piece, Clubby," Muz barked, "and I'll do the rest!"

No pressure, mate!

So I peeled off a lap, kept my nose clean and the bike upright and got back intact. Within a nano-second Muz grabbed the 'bar off me and blazed back out into the bush.

Muz was on a mission and tore off another three or four laps before having to hand the bike back to me for another lap, at which point he was – for once – even more intently serious when he demanded: "Don't f*ck this up Clubby, just one more lap!"

No pressure mate!

Now before you ask, yes, I made that lap, before Muz leapt back onboard and brought it on home.

And bugger me, Muz brought it home in first place of the Teams category, and we each scored a trophy for our efforts. The fact that Muz put a whole lot more effort into the race than I did, well, that's a mere aside to my story.

I never scored many trophies in my racing days, so that one holds pride of place on my mantelpiece – thanks Muz!

> I WAS FAIR CRAPPING MY TYCON JEANS LIKE A BIG BLACK DOG ABOUT RIDING SHOTGUN WITH MUZ

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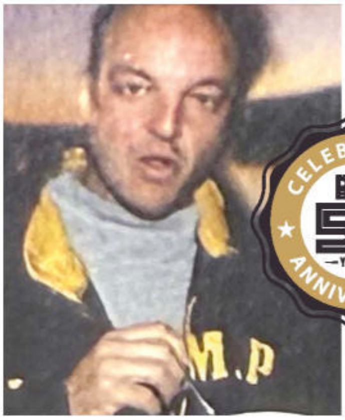

ANDY WIGAN

EDITOR'S NOTE

AGONY & ECSTASY

Chasing horizon
He rode a bike with
than any man on ea

MEETING LEGENDS

ANDY WIGAN DID A LOT AS ADB ED BUT IT WAS THE PEOPLE HE MET THAT'S MEMORABLE

THERE ARE MOMENTS that define your career in motorcycle journalism. Not the press launches or the hours spent behind a screen wrangling words into paragraphs, but the moments that catch you off guard – when you realise you're not just reporting on history, you're standing in the thick of it.

I had one of those moments in 2002, inside the roaring cauldron of the RCA Dome in Indianapolis, when Chad Reed won his first AMA Supercross. I was lucky enough to be there, not just as a journalist, but as a fly on the wall to something bigger – a kid from Kurri Kurri shaking up the most prestigious dirtbike championship on earth.

That night was chaos in the best way. The Yanks didn't quite know what had hit them. Reed had just smoked the field – Brown, Dowd, Antunez, all the big names – and in that moment, he wasn't just fast, he was undeniable. The post-race circus that followed was predictably American: flashing cameras and a hundred voices demanding a piece of Chad. But what struck me most wasn't the win itself – it was what Reed chose to do afterwards.

Instead of popping champagne or basking in his sudden stardom, Chad and his partner Ellie went to the hospital to sit with Michael Byrne, who'd gone down hard in the main. I went with them. It was surreal – Reedy still in his race kit, sitting quietly beside his mate. Byrne was busted up bad – ribs, spine, ankle – and barely able to speak, but when he did, the first thing he asked was, "Did you pass Brownie?"

That was the moment it hit me: Reed wasn't just fast. He was loyal. Grounded. He understood what mattered. In a sport that can reward ego and tunnel vision, Chad showed humility and perspective. He proved he wasn't just fast, he was decent.

> SITTING QUIETLY BESIDE HIS MATE IN A WARD FULL OF CHAOS AND BROKEN BODIES

That kind of character sticks with you. Especially in contrast to one of the hardest things I ever had to write as *ADB* Ed.

In January 2006, I had to write Andy Caldecott's obituary. Even now, those words feel foreign in my mouth. Andy wasn't supposed to die. He was the guy who made the impossible look effortless – his riding was poetry, pure grace on two wheels. But the desert doesn't care about poetry.

Andy had spoken to me about Fabrizio Meoni the year before. Told me, in that calm, unshakable way of his, that sometimes a rider's time just comes. I remember the hairs on the back of my neck standing up as I wrote his final tribute – same date, same stage, same race. The parallels were haunting.

Andy didn't court headlines. He just rode fast, lived humbly and loved deeply. He was a proud dad, a devoted husband, and a true gentleman of the sport. Even in Dakar, the most cutthroat of races, he carried himself with respect.

So, why does Reed's win and Caldecott's loss stand out to me during my time at *ADB*? For me, they both pulled back the curtain on what truly matters in motorcycling. Not the trophies or the glory, but the people – the mateship, the integrity and the quiet strength that binds our community.

Two different stories. Two different ends of the spectrum. But both a reminder that, in this sport, character is everything.

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SAM MACLACHLAN

EDITOR'S NOTE

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SPY
87
Kawasaki
MSC

WITNESSING PRICE

ADB ED SAM MAC WITNESSED TOBY PRICE GREATNESS BEFORE HE WAS CHAMP

I'D BEEN HEARING about some new bloke on the Aussie enduro scene – he rode his Kawasaki like no one had ever seen in the bush. For all Stefan Merriman's finesse, this new bloke was apparently a "wind it on and hope" type of rider – like may of my favourite riders to watch.

But this was all secondhand stories and pub talk – I had never seen it for myself. So as I planted myself deep in an AORC special test in 2009, camera in hand, I couldn't wait to snap my first frames of this much talked about rider. But that's not what happened.

This particular test was awash in thick trees, little more than handlebar-width, at times probably a little less. The track was tight. For most people anyway.

The first riders came through, cranking along at a pace far beyond anything I could manage in such challenging conditions, but I was used to being up close to pro riders doing their thing, so snapped away comfortably. Then I heard it.

What I heard was a bike being held in the upper stratosphere of its rev ceiling, not far off the limiter. The earlier riders had been sensibly riding the 450's torque, grunting their way through. Not this bloke. Was he riding a fire trail I couldn't see? Was he on another track altogether? Because he can't possibly be torturing an engine like that in these tight tracks through the trees…

These were the thoughts I was distracted by as Toby Price swung into view, my first sight of him in the wild. It was just he and I occupying that isolated square of bush at the time, but he wasn't there long.

He was attacking that trail like the motocrosser he was, the key difference being the vegetation his 'bars were gently skimming. He seemed oblivious to the danger, yet was avoiding it like no one I had ever seen in the bush and I had been at the ISDE the year before! The aggression was intense.

I REALISED I HADN'T TAKEN A SINGLE SHOT, THE CAMERA USELESS IN MY SHELLSHOCKED HANDS

As he disappeared from view as quickly as he arrived, his tortured Kawasaki bellowing its goodbye, I realised I hadn't taken a single shot, the camera useless in my shellshocked hands. I hadn't seen anything like it, before or since.

At the end of 2009 in issue #363 of *ADB*, we had a ride of all the AORC winner's bikes. The winners actually rode each others bikes too, although we didn't publish it due to it not being okayed by the various factories.

Toby's bike was a rock of a thing, set up hard and uncompromising. His face when he got off Stefan Merriman's relative armchair-spec Yamaha – which was no less effective – was that of a bloke who has been introduced to a whole new world. He fired questions at Stefan, who was also a little bemused at Toby's stone-age set up. Both incredibly fast but both had completely different set ups.

There's a million tales from my few years editing *ADB* – some published, many not – but this privileged insight into just one of the many dirtbike worlds I was obsessed with is the highlight of that role.

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50
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ANNIVERSARY

DEAN 'DEANO' MELLOR

EDITOR'S NOTE

WALK OF SHAME

DEANO TRADED ROADBIKES FOR DIRTBIKES JUST TO EDIT *ADB*

WHEN I WAS a kid, *ADB* was my favourite magazine. At the time I rode a '77 Honda XR75 and I used to get all excited when I saw modified versions of XRs in the mag, especially ones with a longer fork, a monoshock conversion and a pipe. Luckily I didn't have the coin to butcher the XR back then because as it sits in my garage today it's still almost totally stock.

Years later I transferred to roadbikes and eventually worked on *ADB* sister publication *AMCN*. Then, in 2012, I was appointed Editor of *ADB*, despite the fact I hadn't ridden a motocross or enduro bike in about 10 years.

I needed to get match fit, in preperation for a ride with our advertisers in the Otways in Victoria. That meant practice rides with current Ed Mitch Lees throwing me in the deep end on some nasty singletrack.

Honda kindly teed up a CRF250F for me to ride on the advertiser's weekend, which would meet me at our start point at Otway Off-Road HQ.

As well as our advertisers, we had some special guests on the ride – Ben Grabham and Toby Price – so it wasn't like there was any pressure not to look like a gumby...

Anyway, there I was on a bike I hadn't ridden before, with only half a dozen off-road rides under my belt taking on the slipperiest bush I've seen.

At the start, the tracks were all loamy and fun, but as we headed deeper into the forest conditions became wetter and trickier. Before I knew it we were sliding through bog holes and scrambling up gnarly hills, all the while negotiating hidden tree roots. I lost count of the number of front-end washouts I had and by this time I was starting to think I had spent more of the ride under the bike than on it!

Towards the end of the day I rounded a corner and there it was - one of the the biggest, steepest hills I had seen.

BY THIS TIME I WAS STARTING TO THINK I HAD SPENT MORE OF THE RIDE UNDER THE BIKE THAN ON IT!

Everyone had gathered at the base of the hill and were discussing the best line to take.

Tour leader, Con Thermos, went first and made it look like a walk in the park. A few of the 'more seasoned' riders followed, some of them getting up without too much trouble but some of them requiring assistance from the growing number of riders who lined each side of the track.

Of course, Mitch was there with camera in hand to catch all the carnage as bikes started cartwheeling or spearing off into the bush. By the time it was my turn to have a crack, there were only about two or three bikes still at the bottom of the hill, so there was a large contingent of onlookers ready to take the piss if things went pear-shaped. And pear shaped they went...

On my first attempt I made it about halfway up before stalling and falling over. My second attempt wasn't much better and ended up with me spearing off the track. My third attempt was on foot...

When I got back down the bottom ready to have another go, Pricey took over, jumping on my CRF and blasting up the hill like it was a suburban driveway. I trudged up, completing 'the walk of shame'. But there was no shame. The group was pissing themselves laughing and we had a fun night trading barbs and yarns.

I bloody loved editing *ADB*, not just for the mag itself but for the fun we had and the fantastic readers and industry.

Here's to another 50 years!

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SCORPION MX32
SCORPION MX32
MID SOFT

▲ PIRELLI SCORPION MX32 MID/SOFT (2025)

Just when you thought you'd seen every version of the MX32, Pirelli goes and gives it another birthday. The 2025 Scorpion MX32 Mid/Soft is the latest iteration of the tyre you've probably already raced, replaced and ranted about on the group ride. According to Pirelli, it's been redeveloped straight from the pressure cooker of AMA and MXGP, with a new front said to improve braking and help you tip in easier, and a revised rear that's meant to get you off the line and out of corners quicker. Whether that means more holeshots or just better burnouts in the paddock remains to be seen.

Tyre sizing is standard fare: • Front: 80/100-21M/C 51M MST • Rear: 110/90-19, 120/80-19 and 120/90-19 NHS options

RRP: Front $149.95 and rear $179.95

WEBSITE: www.pirellimoto.com.au

Barkbusters
Barkb
TENERE 700
Barkbusters ©

▲ BARKBUSTERS HAND GUARD KIT – YAMAHA TENERE 700 (MY25+)

Barkbusters is back at it, bolting up more Aussie-made hardware to more bikes than ever. The latest addition to the company's ever-expanding catalogue is a bike-specific handguard kit for the 2025-on Yamaha Tenere 700. It's designed to replace the OEM plastic spoons with proper full wrap-around aluminium protection, and it's compatible with all the usual suspects from the Barkbusters line-up: JET, VPS, STORM and even the fancy Carbon guards – if you're feeling posh.

Compatible with: • JET (JET-003) • VPS (VPS-203) • STORM (STM-003) • CARBON (BCF-003)

RRP: TBC

WEBSITE: www.barkbusters.net

▼ O'NEAL PRODIGY V.26 GEAR SET – LIMITED EDITION DROP

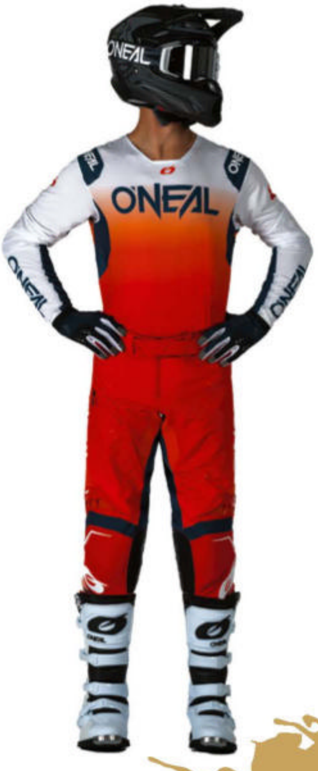
Fresh off the truck and looking like it means business, the O'Neal Prodigy V.26 has landed – and it's anything but subtle. This limited-edition Five Five kit is what happens when over 50 years of racing pedigree meets a factory rider wishlist. Worn by pros like Dylan Ferrandis and Justin Cooper, the new Prodigy gear set is stacked with techy fabrics, slick venting and more stretch than your post-ride yoga class. Haven't tested it ourselves yet, but it sure looks fast.

The Prodigy Jersey – Five Five V.26 comes with O'Neal's all-new 4-Cell performance fabric, offering full four-way stretch for unrestricted movement. It uses laser-cut venting on the upper chest, arms and sides to help with airflow, and stitchless welded seams on the sleeves for that clean, modern finish. The extended mesh tail is designed to stay tucked thanks to clear silicone printing on the lower back, while a seamless cuff and stretch-lined collar boost comfort. At just 198g in a size L, it's also one of the lightest jerseys in O'Neal's arsenal.

The Prodigy Pants – Five Five V.26 use lightweight denier fabrics reinforced with stretch panels and triple-stitched seams in all the right places. They feature a pre-curved leg design for better fit in the riding position, with padded leather inner knees for grip and durability. Airflow comes via laser-cut perforations and integrated air intakes, while a 360-degree adjustable belt system keeps them firmly in place. There's even a hidden zippered hip pocket and a silicone-lined waistband with soft-feel tech to keep things comfortable. Out back, a 900D saddle with quilted seat padding handles the hard stuff.

RRP: Jersey $99.95;
Pants $269.95

WEBSITE: www.oneal.com



THE ESSENTIALS

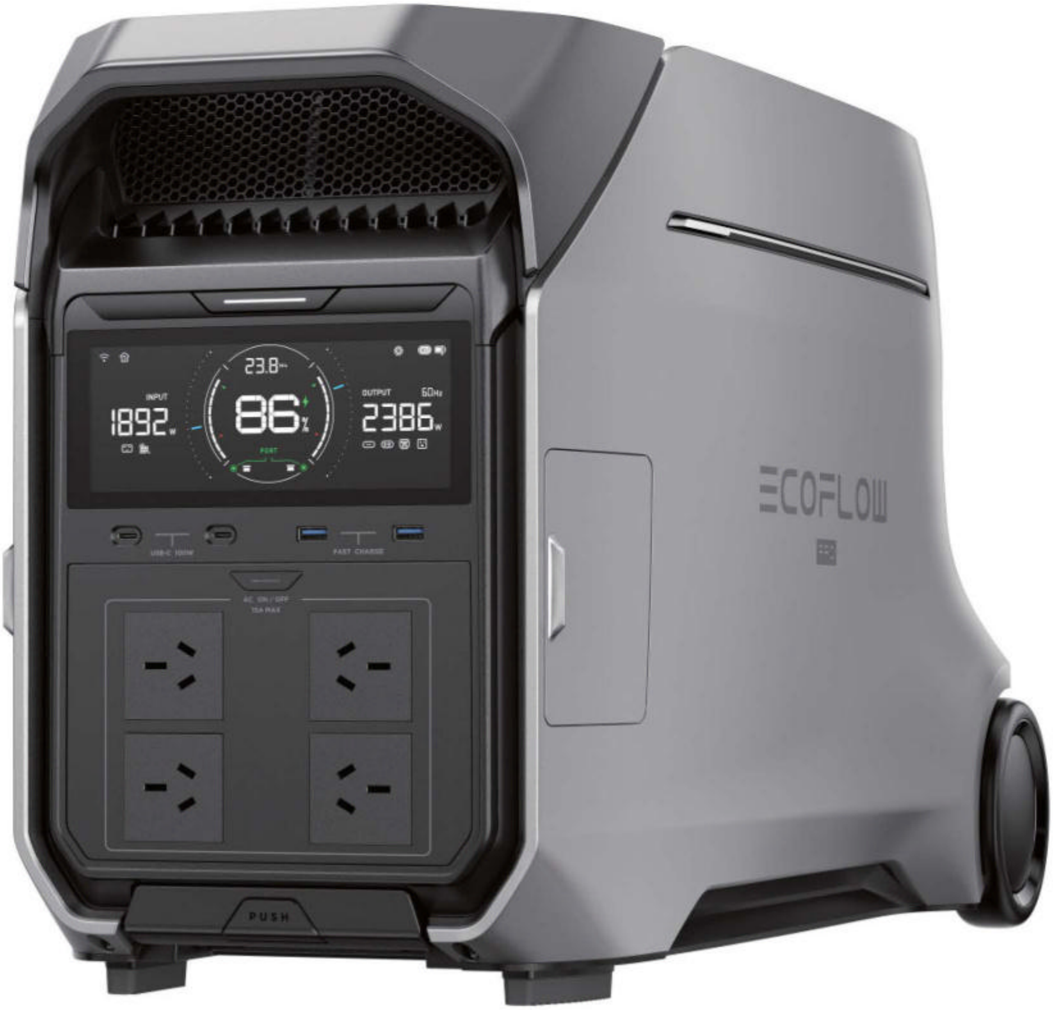
FIST HANDWEAR – CHAPTER 26 GLOVES DROP

Another chapter in the book of bold. FIST Handwear's Chapter 26 has landed, bringing with it a fresh stack of gloves dripping in personality, thanks to collabs with BMX and moto icons like Daniel Sandoval, Greg Lutzka and Baxter Maiwald. Whether you ride ramps, tracks or just want something loud on your hands, this limited drop's got something for you (and your kid).

They're available in adult and youth sizes and are built with a single-layer Clarino palm and four-way stretch spandex upper so they're extra grippy.

RRP: $44.95

WEBSITE:
www.fisthandwear.com



ECOFLOW DELTA PRO 3

The EcoFlow DELTA Pro 3 has rolled into Australia with a pretty clear brief: take everything short of the kitchen sink and run it off one sleek, quiet, 51.5kg box of lithium. Packing a massive 4kWh of LFP (LiFePO4) battery power and 4000W of AC output, this beast is made for more than just blackouts – it's perfect for race days, trackside pit setups, off-grid camping and keeping your kids' electric dirt bike juiced for another round of backyard mayhem. You could even top up a Stark Varg if you're feeling cheeky.

It features a buffet of ports – USB-C, USB-A, Anderson, 240V and 12V DC outputs – so you can charge cameras, laptops, lights, fridges, phones and anything else you'd normally baby-sit with a generator. The dual solar input (up to 2600W combined) makes it genuinely solar-capable, and you can scale it up to a ridiculous 12kWh with extra batteries. There's even a 10ms UPS feature, meaning your gear won't blink if the power drops out. And yes, it's on wheels with a telescopic handle, because no one's carrying 51kg of battery like a gym hero.

RRP: $4599

WEBSITE:
www.ecoflow.com/au

ITALIAN

DUCATI
SHOWA

Italian manufacturer Ducati fires its first shots in its attack on the motocross scene

WORDS // **GEOFF BRAICO** PHOTOS // **ALEX PHOTO**

ATTACK

UNI FILTER
MOTUL
HOLESHOT Graphics
DUCATI
alpinestars

It's slim and easy to grip with your legs

That deep red looks trick

Welcome to the motocross world, Ducati! The Italian icon of road racing has officially joined the motocross party with the introduction of the MY26 Desmo450 MX machine, and boy has it come out swinging. There were rumours circulating about two years ago of the Italian company stepping outside its

The Desmo450 MX is an astounding first effort

DUCATI
450
DESMO MX

Plastics are top notch

DUCATI
450
DESMO

comfort zone and building a motocross machine, and now, finally, those rumours have been formally revealed and I was one of the lucky few to travel halfway across the world to Italy to ride the bike freshly rolled off the factory floor.

It has been a massive project for Ducati to enter the motocross world and it's incredible to see the project come to life. It's only been around four years from the first concept drawings of the Desmo450 MX to now, with the first bikes being rolled off the production line as we speak, and for the Italian company to achieve this is very impressive.

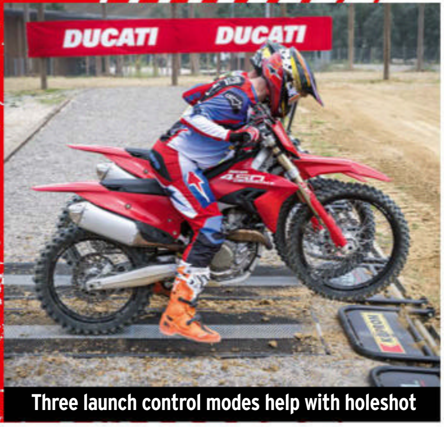
Ducati has been building motorcycles for almost a century, and while it hasn't dabbled in dirtbikes until now, I've always considered it a prestigious brand with deep racing roots. Still, I wasn't prepared for what was in store at the Desmo450 MX launch. I figured we'd see some cool stuff – but the team at Ducati blew the doors off with next-level hospitality and some of the most impressive experiences I've ever had in the dirtbike world.

This company isn't just a motorcycle manufacturer – it's a giant, tight-knit family. It was genuinely inspiring to witness how Ducati operates day to day. The staff work side by side, share meals together, and celebrate milestones in a big way. To be part of the moment when the first Desmo450 MX rolled off the production line was something I'll remember for a long time.

The entire factory shut down for more than an hour as we witnessed the CEO deliver a heartfelt speech, personally thanking every worker

The Desmo450 MX isn't just a new model. It's a new chapter in the company's story.

A gripper seat should be on your shopping list



Three launch control modes help with holeshot

who helped bring the Desmo450 MX to life. It was an emotional moment – there were tears in the crowd – and a clear sign of what this bike means to the Ducati family. The Desmo450 MX isn't just a new model. It's a new chapter in the company's story.

THE BIKE

So, what's the Desmo450 MX all about? Ducati has brought its renowned Desmodromic valve technology – developed through decades of road racing – into the world of motocross. If you're wondering what Desmodromic means, it's a valve system that doesn't rely on springs. Instead, the valves are opened and closed mechanically, allowing for more precise control and extremely high revs. In practice, it means the engine spins out further and faster than most 450s on the market – and that's a big part of what gives the Desmo450 MX its unique Italian character.

The Ducati Desmo450 MX engine revs to 11,900rpm – significantly higher than most 450 motocross bikes – thanks to its Desmodromic valve system. In fact, the redline could've been set even higher, but upcoming 2026 FIM noise regulations forced a cap. It's also worth noting Ducati recommends oil changes every 15 hours – a longer interval than most 450s on the market.

The engine is nestled in an 11-piece alloy twin-spar frame and the Desmo450 MX features Showa suspension – a 49mm fork and monoshock – Brembo brakes and clutch, and Excel rims with Pirelli tyres. It wouldn't be a Ducati without the brand's famous deep red colour,

Excel rims wear Pirelli rubber

Tool-less access to the air filter is good

and the designers have done a nice job making the plastics slim and symmetrical behind the legs, so riders have a good connection to the bike. The rear-end is actually tapered a little bit to help riders grip the bike when standing.

Air filter access is tool-free via the left sidepanel, though refitting the cover takes a bit of practice. A map switch on the left 'bar offers two maps – each with soft and fast options – plus Quick Shift and traction control. The TC system uses a sensor above the front sprocket to monitor wheel speed, with an algorithm adjusting traction where it's needed. It's the only system of its kind on the market. There's a heap to unpack on this all-new bike – and it looks the goods – but how does it ride?

THE RIDE

We were greeted with a perfectly prepped hillside '04-style moto track in Faenza, Italy, with weather to match. Owned by MotoGP star Andrea Dovizioso, the track had elevation, off-cambers, decent jumps and a fast yet technical layout. It'd been a while since I'd ridden a proper MX track, so it took a few laps to get in the zone. But once I did, I put almost two hours on the bike! My hands and backside were sore by the end, but I didn't care – I had an absolute blast.

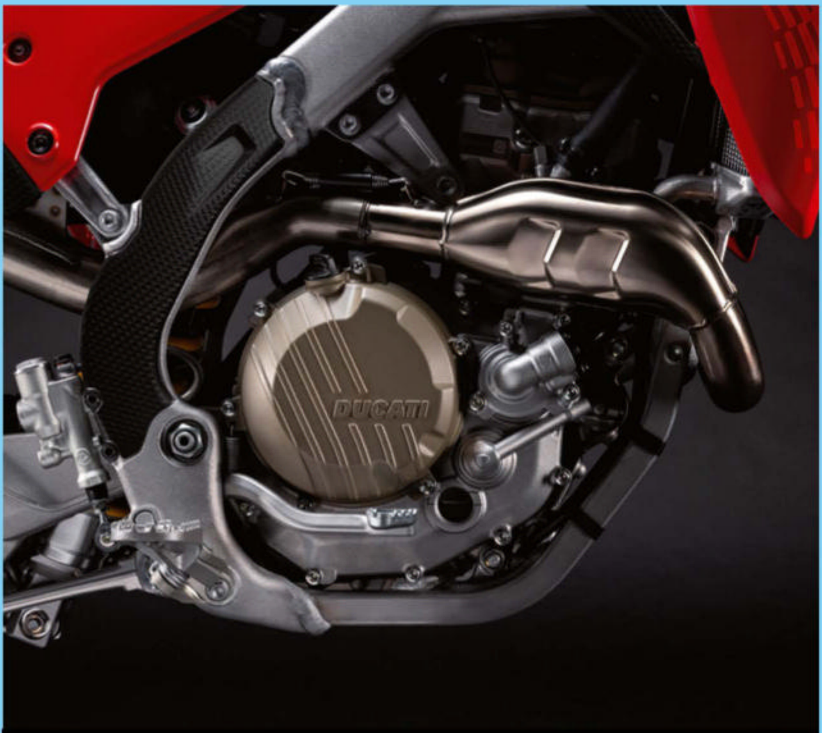
The Desmodromic engine's power delivery is seriously impressive. Off the bottom, it doesn't hit with an aggressive snap – instead, it rolls on smoothly with a healthy dose of torque. But as the revs climb, you really start to appreciate what Desmo tech can do. The thing revs to the moon, and it took me a while to get used to how long I could hold gears. Where I'd usually short-shift out of a turn – say, second to third, then into fourth – I found myself staying in second or third a lot longer. Revving it out became the smoother and faster option. It's a strong engine, but surprisingly forgiving, with a broad spread of power that'll suit a wide range of riders.

There's also the Ducati app – still in Beta at the time of the launch – but already offering a huge range of adjustability. There are two fully customisable ride modes, with two levels of throttle response, three launch control settings, two levels of engine braking and four traction

DUCATI
450
DESMO MX

Brembo caliper and Galfer disc are standard

Braico shredding it up


The engine revs all the way to 11,900rpm

The Ducati Desmo450 MX engine revs to 11,900rpm – significantly higher than most 450 motocross bikes – thanks to its Desmodromic valve system

Rear also gets Brembo/Galfer brake package

Braico loved the loamy Italian soil

DUCATI
450
DESMO MX

Cockpit gives good access to mode settings

> **Next thing I know, I'm being handed the gripper seat freshly removed from nine-time world champ Antonio Cairoli's bike**

CATI
CATI
DUCATI
450
DESMO MX

control levels within each. I found the red map – the dynamic/aggressive option – with traction control enabled was the sweet spot. The bottom-end pick-up felt lively, but the traction control made it easy to keep power going to the ground. I've never been big on traction control, but this is one of the best systems I've tried.

The only change I'd like to make is swapping the 13-tooth front sprocket for a 14-tooth to stretch out second gear – potentially allowing me to ride the whole track in just two gears. Overall, the engine is hugely impressive: broad, manageable, and packed with potential thanks to all the available tuning options.

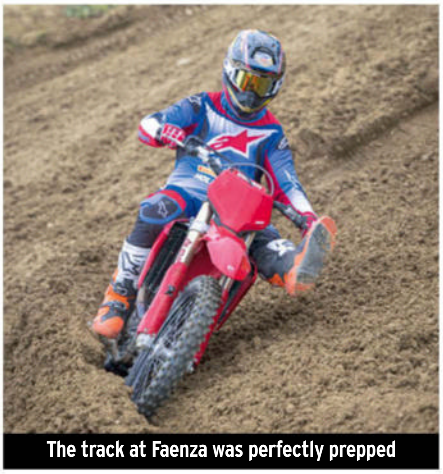
Suspension-wise, the Showa 49mm spring fork was solid, and I had no issues with the Showa shock either. Some of the other riders mentioned the bike felt a little soft, but coming from an off-road background, I was more than happy with Ducati's stock motocross setting – it felt firm enough for me. As the day progressed and the track developed more ruts and bumps, the suspension performance actually improved. I pushed the fork tubes through the clamps by 3mm to help lengthen the chassis, and it made a noticeable difference to the bike's turning. Ducati's engineers kept reminding us how sensitive the chassis is to small setup changes – and they weren't kidding. That 3mm tweak really transformed the front-end feel.

The bike feels incredibly well-balanced and I gelled with it quickly. My only gripe was the seat – I was sliding all over it. I knew the team had gripper seats on the race bikes, so I asked to try one. At first, they said no, so I dealt with it. But I couldn't shake how much it was affecting my ride, so I asked again. Next thing I know, I'm being handed the gripper seat freshly removed from nine-time world champ Antonio Cairoli's bike. Fan-boy moment activated. I bolted it on, hit the track, and instantly felt the difference. Even though I was tired, I

As a first crack at motocross, the Desmo450 MX is a damn good effort

went out and logged another moto – now fully at one with the bike.

The rest of the bike is packed with top-shelf kit – Brembo brakes front and rear, Brembo clutch master cylinder, Excel rims, Galfer discs, DID chain and Pirelli tyres. The finish quality is exceptional, and the plastics still looked new after a full day of testing. The frame guards are cleverly integrated plastic inserts that help maintain the slim feel through the foot area. Ducati claims a wet (no fuel) weight of 104.8kg, which puts it on the lighter end of the scale. Interestingly, the stock rear tyre is a 110 rather than the more common 120 – something we're keen to swap out and test on home soil.



The track at Faenza was perfectly prepped

Ducati hopes plenty of riders will have this view

FINAL THOUGHTS

I'm seriously impressed. As a first crack at motocross, the Desmo450 MX is a damn good effort. Ducati hasn't rushed this – the bike has been through nearly two years of testing and refinement before going public, and it shows. The Desmodromic engine is a standout, offering smooth torque, insane over-rev, and surprising manageability. Add to that a quality chassis, adjustable electronics, refined suspension, and premium components, and you've got a seriously competitive machine straight out of the gate. Ducati means business – and if this is just the beginning, motocross fans have a lot to look forward to.

Got something to say about this yarn?
Let us know at adbmag@adbmag.com.au

DUCATI DESMO450 MX

ENGINE

TYPE: Single-cylinder four-stroke, desmodromic, electric start
DISPLACEMENT: 449cc
BORE & STROKE: 96mm x 62.1mm
COOLING: Liquid-cooled
COMPRESSION RATIO: 13.5:1
FUEL METERING: EFI
TANK CAPACITY: 7.2 litres (including 1.3L reserve)
TRANSMISSION: Five-speed
CLUTCH: Hydraulic, Brembo, wet multi-plate

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE: 1480mm
SEAT HEIGHT: 961mm
GROUND CLEARANCE: 336mm
CLAIMED WEIGHT: 104.8kg (wet, no fuel)

SUSPENSION

FRONT: Showa, 49mm USD spring fork, compression and rebound adjustable, 310mm travel
REAR: Showa monoshock, preload, compression and rebound adjustable, 305mm travel

BRAKES

FRONT: Brembo, 260mm disc
REAR: Brembo, 220mm disc

RUNNING GEAR

HANDLEBAR: Aluminium taper
FRONT TYRE: Pirelli Scorpion MX32 80/100-21
REAR TYRE: Pirelli Scorpion MX32 110/90-19
CHAIN: DID 520
RIMS: Excel Takasago

PRICE & CONTACTS

RRP: $16,300
BROWSER: ducati.com/au
BLOWER: 1300 658 400
WARRANTY: N/A

Queensland

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Go HARD

WORDS **MITCH LEES** // PHOTOS **JOSH EVANS**

WE COMPARE SEVEN OF THE BEST 300CC TWO-STROKE ENDURO BIKES AGAINST EACH OTHER IN HARD ENDURO TERRAIN FOR ONE WINNER!

The first part of our 300cc two-stroke shootout last issue was about picking a bike that was best for trail riding and off-road racing with a focus on speed, special test flow and long-haul trail rides. This second shootout is to cover the other things 300s are good at: rocks.

Welcome to the Hard Enduro Shootout – a test built for the riders who like it slow, steep, technical and utterly punishing.

Hard enduro is no longer a niche subculture. It's exploded across Australia and the world in recent years, with more riders than ever building tracks in their own backyards, chasing down impossible climbs and signing up for brutal events like Wildwood Rock, the Kosciuszko Killer, or any other extreme enduro sprouting up in every state.

The bikes have evolved to meet this demand, and so has the way we need to test them. That's why we've returned with almost the same line-up of machines from our Race & Trail Shootout – but with a totally new mindset.

This time, it's all about low-speed control, usable torque, smooth

2025

300cc

TWO-STROKE HARD ENDURO

LEATT
2026
MX26
DROPPING AUGUST
TWENTY TWENTY FIVE
LEATTMOTO.COM.AU

What started out as purely a cattle farm has become one of the most brutal testing grounds in the country.

clutch delivery, rear-wheel traction and how well a bike handles the truly ugly stuff. Where the last test rewarded high-speed stability, top-end performance and fast-charging characteristics, this one favours those who would prefer to crawl out of trouble – bikes that can chug up a greasy rock ledge at walking pace, tractor through tight ruts, or crawl down off-camber chutes without kicking you over the 'bars. And because hard enduro riding asks such different things from a bike, we made the call to separate the tests entirely.

To combine them would've been a compromise – and these bikes deserve better. One notable change in the line-up is Beta Australia's decision to swap out the 300 Race Edition for the X-Pro model in this test. It's a softer-sprung, more affordable version of the Beta two-stroke, built with comfort and technical terrain in mind, rather than flat-out sprint performance. And in these conditions, it made perfect sense. The aggressive, race-spec suspension on the Race Edition might've been brilliant for high-speed work, but here, the plushness and forgiveness of the X-Pro are exactly what you want.

So with the line-up locked, we packed up the bikes, loaded the utes and trailers, and headed to a test site that would separate the real hard enduro weapons from the rest.

LOCATION

Tucked away on the edge of the Great Dividing Range in New South Wales is my families private cattle property. Having access to a property like this is a privilege becasue it is perfect for hard enduro testing.

This place was built for this kind of testing. Literally. What started out as purely a cattle farm has become one of the most brutal testing grounds in the country. We're talking long, off-camber hillclimbs, deep, eroded gullies, rock gardens, muddy creeks and technical switchbacks. Some of these sections are only just rideable in ideal conditions – throw in dry dust or greasy mud and it turns into a true test of skill and endurance.

This terrain forces you to learn how to feather a clutch, balance throttle and brake at crawling speed, and coax the rear tyre to find traction where there should be none.

And that's what this test is all about.

THE TEST CREW

JEFF BRIGGS

Level: Vet
Age: 40
Size: 180cm, 100kg
Bike: KTM 450SX-F

GEOFF BRAICO

Level: Pro
Age: 37
Size: 175cm, 80kg
Bike: Yamaha YZ450FX

MITCH LEES

Level: Clubman
Age: 39
Size: 188cm, 100kg
Bike: Sherco 300 SE Factory

CHRISTIAN GIBSON

Level: Clubman
Age: 56
Size: 188cm, 80kg
Bike: Beta RR 300

GRAHAM GROVENEVELD

Level: Clubman
Age: 53
Size: 191cm, 90kg
Bike: KTM 300 EXC

THE SCORECARD

In all our motocross shootouts for MY25, we have had each of the manufacturers represented by a particular rider. We didn't do that for this shootout as this is mostly about punters riding, and punters aren't exactly sponsored! But we do pick riders who are unbiased and who own and ride different brands. When it comes time to score the bikes the riders allocate scores in multiple categories for each machine. The scores are split into three categories which are weighted, comprising Engine (50%), Suspension/Steering (40%) and Ergos/Brakes (10%), with each rider giving a score out of 10 for each category.

FANTIC XE 300

A PROMISING FIRST HIT BUT NOT YET A HARD ENDURO HAMMER

The Fantic XE 300 rolled into our hard enduro test as the wildcard – the new kid on the block with big ambitions and a spec sheet that raised plenty of eyebrows. Built around an Italian-developed, fuel-injected 293cc two-stroke engine and draped in a Yamaha YZ-inspired chassis, this machine has been hyped as the closest thing yet to a YZ300 that Yamaha never made. But in the rocks, ruts and steep terrain of our private enduro playground, the XE 300's shine dimmed a little.

Let's start with the positives: the KYB suspension on this bike is exceptional. With a 48mm fully adjustable KYB fork offering 300mm of travel, and a rear shock with a whopping 315mm, the XE 300 delivered a plush, confidence-inspiring ride that soaked up rock edges, sharp ledges and g-outs better than most.

It's suprisingly soft for KYB suspension which is exactly what you want in terrain that's more goat track than race circuit.

But the engine – while responsive – just didn't bring the bottom-end grunt that hard enduro demands. The Minarelli-built 72mm x 72mm bore and stroke engine, with indirect dual-injector EFI and a wet multi-disc clutch actuated via Brembo hydraulics, delivered clean, crisp response at higher revs… but lacked the torque and crawlability needed at low throttle when the clutch was fully out.

It's incredibly responsive but it lacks big torque as soon as the clutch is all the way out. This made crawling or grovelling up hills hard. Jeff Briggs echoed this, noting how difficult it was to keep the bike in the sweet spot.

Compounding the issue is the five-speed gearbox, which gave testers a tough time finding the right ratio in slower terrain. First gear worked for the most part, but as Graham pointed out, "It's just missing that mid-range." And unlike the six-speed gearboxes on most of the other bikes in this test, the Fantic felt limited when the trail turned nasty.

We also felt the mapping felt a little rich in spots, and while the dual-mode map switch did make a noticeable difference, the aggressive map wasn't enough to make up for the bike's lack of bottom-end. The throttle also felt too rewponsove at times, which made balancing

Fantic XE 300

ENGINE

TYPE: Single-cylinder, two-stroke with reed valve intake and electronically controlled exhaust valve
DISPLACEMENT: 292.9cc
BORE AND STROKE: 72.0mm x 72.0mm
COOLING: Liquid
COMPRESSION RATIO: 11.5:1
FUEL METERING: Indirect injection with double injectors
TANK CAPACITY: 9L
TRANSMISSION: 5-speed
CLUTCH: Wet multi-disc with hydraulic control (STM actuator, Brembo pump)

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE: 1485mm
SEAT HEIGHT: 970mm
GROUND CLEARANCE: N/A
DRY WEIGHT: 107kg

SUSPENSION

FRONT: KYB 48 mm fully adjustable fork, 300mm travel
REAR: KYB fully adjustable monoshock, 315mm travel

BRAKES

FRONT: Hydraulic disc, 270mm
REAR: Hydraulic disc, 240mm

RUNNING GEAR

HANDLEBAR: N/A
FRONT TYRE: Metzeler Extreme 90/90-21
REAR TYRE: Metzeler Extreme 140/80-18

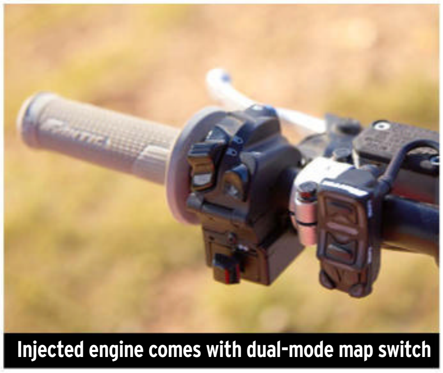
PRICE & CONTACTS

RRP: $18,495 + ORC
BROWSER: gasoline.com.au
WARRANTY: N/A

traction and torque a juggling act.

The dry weight of 107kg, seat height of 970mm, and 270/240mm brake discs front and rear make for a very modern, well-specced package on paper, and on more open terrain, that's exactly where this bike belongs. It's lively, lightweight, well-suspended and exciting to ride – just not in ultra-tech terrain. The Fantic XE 300 is a commendable first attempt in hard enduro – a genuinely exciting bike with sharp looks, serious suspension and plenty of potential. But in hard enduro terrain, it's a little out of its depth. With more flywheel weight, lower gearing, or a revised power delivery map, it could easily become a weapon in this space. For now though, it's better suited to faster, flowier riding where it can stretch its legs and stay off the clutch.

Fantic seat height is 970mm



Injected engine comes with dual-mode map switch

48mm fully adjustable KYB fork

TESTERS THOUGHTS

GRAHAM GROVENELD

The KYB in this just works the best. It's super soft but really forgiving. I struggled finding the right gear in the five-speed 'box but going through all the slow stuff in first was really nice… but it's just missing that mid-range.

GEOFF BRAICO

I think it's a little bit rich in some spots, but then it sort of clears out. They've tried to refine it but it just needs more refinement. I think it's a pretty good effort for a first try. In the current state, I don't think it's really suited to this particular stuff. It's definitely more suited to the more open race tracks or just more open flowy stuff. The map switch on that makes a big difference too.

JEFF BRIGGS

There's nothing in between top and bottom. It's a challenge. On hills you've gotta use lots of clutch otherwise there's lots of pushing. You've just gotta manage it. There's a clear connection from the throttle to your hand, finding that right point and trying to stay on that power is hard without it spiking and ditching.

MITCH LEES

The Fantic is an excellent first attempt at a 300cc two-stroke enduro bike but it isn't really suited to hard enduro. It's incredibly responsive but it lacks big torque as soon as the clutch is all the way out. This made crawling or grovelling up hills hard. It just didn't have enough torque in real low revs. The suspension worked in hard enduro and the other components worked well too, but it just needs a different gearbox or more flywheel weight.

BETA RR 300 X-PRO

A BIKE BULIT FOR GOING WHERE THE TERRAIN DOESN'T WANT YOU

For the hard enduro portion of this 300cc two-stroke shootout, Beta made the call to swap out the RR 300 Race model we tested in the trail shootout last issue and instead gave us the X-Pro edition. On paper, it's a step back – softer suspension, more budget-friendly build, less focused on speed – but out in the snotty, rocky terrain we were riding, I have to say it made total sense.

The X-Pro really does feel like the bike that bridges the gap between the full-blown Race model and the ultra-soft Xtrainer. It shares the same 292.6cc two-stroke engine with a 73mm x 69.9mm bore and stroke, Keihin PWK 36mm carburettor, and the BPV power valve system, but the delivery is different. It's smoother, more measured and far more manageable at low speeds. It doesn't bark or launch out of corners – instead, it crawls, climbs and hooks up beautifully. For technical terrain, that's gold.

Jetting straight out of the crate was about as close to perfect as I've ever seen on a carby bike. The power isn't as snappy or racey as the Race Edition, but honestly, that's part of what made it so good in the rocks and ruts. The torque is right where you need it – off idle and through the mid-range – and there's enough grunt to carry second or third through a lot of tricky creek sections without needing to stab the clutch.

One of the biggest advantages of this bike in the hard enduro environment is its overall manageability. It's low. The 930mm seat height and 103.5kg dry weight make it one of the easiest bikes

in the group to dab a foot or paddle when needed. You sit in it rather than on it, and that lower centre of gravity really helps when the trail disappears and you're threading between rock ledges and logs. Even little touches like the softer seat foam – finally – made long, slow climbs more comfortable. The old plank is gone… and good riddance.

The suspension package is on the soft side, no doubt. Up front, you get a ZF SHC 48mm open-cartridge fork and out back a ZF monoshock with progressive linkage (295mm and 290mm of travel respectively). It's not going to love you if you're coming in hot or slamming through g-outs, but in hard enduro terrain – where speeds are low and traction is king – the plushness actually works in its favour. The fork soaks up slow-speed chop and awkward hits well, and while the shock doesn't offer the race-spec firmness of the RR Race, it tracks the ground nicely and maintains traction.

It's not a flashy bike. But it's functional – and functional is what you want when you're grovelling your way up a washed-out gully at walking pace. The 320mm of ground clearance still works and the Nissin brakes with 260/240mm wave disc do a great job.

The RR 300 X-Pro isn't built to race flat-out – and that's exactly why it works so well in hard enduro. It's low seat, grunty engine and forgiving fork, feels like it was purpose-built for this kind of terrain. For riders who like torque and their feet to touch the ground over speed, this bike works.

Beta RR 300 Race

ENGINE

TYPE: Single-cylinder, two-stroke
DISPLACEMENT: 292.6cc
BORE AND STROKE: 73mm x 69.9mm
COOLING: Liquid
COMPRESSION RATIO: 11.6:1
FUEL METERING: Keihin PWK 36 carburettor
TANK CAPACITY: 9.5L
TRANSMISSION: 6-speed
CLUTCH: Wet multi-disc

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE: 1482mm
SEAT HEIGHT: 930mm
GROUND CLEARANCE: 320mm
WEIGHT: 103.5kg (dry)

SUSPENSION

FRONT: ZF SHC 48mm open-cartridge fork, 295mm travel
REAR: ZF monoshock with progressive linkage, 907mm travel

BRAKES

FRONT: Nissin, hydraulic wave disc, 260mm
REAR: Nissin, hydraulic wave disc, 240mm

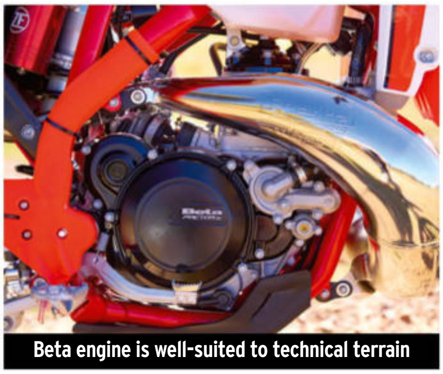
RUNNING GEAR

HANDLEBAR: N/A
FRONT TYRE: Pirelli Scorpion Mid-Soft 90/90-21
REAR TYRE: Pirelli Scorpion Mid-Soft 140/80-18

PRICE & CONTACTS

RRP: $15,720 + ORC
BROWSER: betamotor.com.au
WARRANTY: 6 months

The 930mm seat height makes it easy



Beta engine is well-suited to technical terrain

TESTERS THOUGHTS

CHRISTIAN GIBSON

I didn't notice too much difference in overall power compared with the Race model we tested in the trail/race shootout. The Race is a bit snappier but for hard enduro the X-Pro still works well. It's got a stingy top-end but it will also crawl in the rocks. I got through the rocky creek section better on the Beta than I did on any other bike. The jetting is as close to perfect as possible. After riding in this stuff, I totally get it. It's sitting exactly between the Race and the Xtrainer.

GRAHAM GROVENELD

I really like the new seat compared with the old one; it's a pleasure to sit on compared to the piece of wood it used to be. The engine is super impressive. The suspension works but you find its limits pretty quickly if you're heavy or going too fast into big hits.

GEOFF BRAICO

It's close to the top for me. Everything about it is easy. Yes, the suspension's way too soft for what I want do out on a race track but for this gnarly terrain, being softer it feels right. And the boys at Beta have got it jetted about as perfectly as possible. The power is everything you want it to be; you can just crawl it down to nothing and it doesn't bog down or anything.

JEFF BRIGGS

The shorter seat actually makes a big difference to crawling in this hard stuff and getting your feet on the ground. And they've softened that seat up. I remember when it used to feel like you were sitting on a wooden plank! And the engine is perfect for this stuff – you don't need any more power.

MITCH LEES

I had the Racing version last year and it was excellent. The twin spark engine had insane torque and made linear power. So I was nervous that this one would have some weak spots in the power curve, but it didn't. It had plenty of power. The suspension was soft compared with the Race model but it still worked well and didn't need any fine-tuning. Oh, and the bike felt lower than the others.

GASGAS EC 300

THE BUDGET BRAWLER THAT LOVES TO CONQUER HILLS

The GASGAS EC 300 is the budget option in the Austrian stable, and in a test full of race-spec weapons and exotic hardware, that usually means a few corners cut. But in this terrain – steep, loose, rocky and low-speed – I'll admit it held its own better than I expected.

Let's get the obvious out of the way first: yes, it's missing a few bits. No map switch, no handguards, no bashplate and it runs Braktec brakes and clutch instead of the higher-end Brembo setup. The wheels are lower spec too and overall the bike lacks that polished, high-end feel of the Husky or KTM. But none of that really stopped it from performing.

What really surprised me was just how good the new WP XPLOR 48mm open-cartridge fork is. For an open-chamber design, it soaked up the rocky creek beds, square edges and loose downhill chatter better than expected. It's definitely on the softer side, but for hard enduro speeds – where you're rarely doing more than crawling – it works.

The 293cc EFI engine, shared across the Austrian trio, is still super linear – maybe too linear for some riders – but in the hard enduro context that makes it easy to manage. It won't rip your arms off, but it'll lug and climb well enough. It runs the same 72mm x 72mm bore and stroke as the KTM and Husky, with Keihin throttle body injection and a six-speed 'box, but the airbox and ECU mapping do feel a little more restricted here, especially off the bottom. You can crawl it through the hard stuff, but you're working the clutch a bit more to keep it in the sweet spot. It doesn't have that throaty grunt the KTM delivers, but it's still very usable and easy to manage.

Weight comes in at 107.6kg dry, with a 956mm seat height and 354mm ground clearance, and like its siblings, the GASGAS benefits from the new chassis introduced last year. It feels slimmer, better balanced and more planted than the older TPI model. The front and rear Braktec brakes

GASGAS EC 300

ENGINE
TYPE: Single-cylinder, two-stroke
DISPLACEMENT: 293.15cc
BORE AND STROKE: 72mm x 72mm
COOLING: Liquid
COMPRESSION RATIO: N/A
FUEL METERING: Keihin EFI, 39mm throttle body
TANK CAPACITY: 9L
TRANSMISSION: 6-speed
CLUTCH: DDS wet multi-disc clutch, Braktec hydraulics

DIMENSIONS
WHEELBASE: 1489mm
SEAT HEIGHT: 956mm
GROUND CLEARANCE: 354mm
WEIGHT: 107.6 kg (dry)

SUSPENSION
FRONT: WP 48mm XPLOR-USD fork, 300mm travel
REAR: WP XACT monoshock with linkage, 300mm travel

BRAKES
FRONT: Braktec, hydraulic Disc brake, 260mm
REAR: Braktec, hydraulic Disc brake, 220mm

RUNNING GEAR
HANDLEBAR: Neken, aluminium 28/22 mm
FRONT TYRE: Maxxis Enduro 90/90-21
REAR TYRE: Maxxis Enduro 140/80-18

PRICE & CONTACTS
RRP: $16,565 + ORC
BROWSER: www.gasgas.com/en-au
WARRANTY: 3 months

(260mm/220mm) actually work this time, too – a big step up from the last GASGAS we rode at the 300cc hard enduro shootout three years ago where the front brake barely slowed the thing down. That alone deserves a mention.

Is it the best hard enduro bike here? No. But is it one of the easiest to ride if you're new to this style of terrain? Absolutely. It's low-stress, soft, manageable and comfortable but missing a few bits you simply can't go into hard enduro terrain without. With a few protection bits added – handguards and a skid plate, for starters – it's a solid hard enduro platform for weekend warriors. It's affordable, capable and far more refined than it used to be.

The GASGAS feels a bit restricted

Braktec braking package is much improved

Power delivery is linear... maybe too linear

TESTERS THOUGHTS

CHRISTIAN GIBSON

That's one of the best open cartridge forks I've tested. For that kind of slow-paced terrain, it soaks up the bumps really, really well. I find the engine works well in this stuff but I was a bit busy finding gears and maybe it was a bit noisy.

GRAHAM GROVENELD

I actually didn't mind it through the hard stuff compared with how I thought it went in the fast stuff. Off the bottom it's a real throaty bike. But it's entry level, right? I'm still not sure why they have it though, because for this kind of stuff you need to make a fair few changes in protection gear. It's got nothing on it.

GEOFF BRAICO

GASGAS is the cheaper option and that's what it feels like when you ride it. It feels cheaper to ride without things like the maps. This bike feels a little underpowered compared with the other Austrian bikes. That definitely makes it feel more like the beginner bike.

JEFF BRIGGS

The GASGAS EC 300 has improved out of sight compared with the old TPI model with the old XPLOR fork. The new one is better in all areas than the old one but not as good as the other bikes here in the hard stuff, at least without some mods.

MITCH LEES

I agree with Briggsy – this GASGAS is so much better than the previous model. It has a better fork and the front brake actually works, unlike the last GASGAS we rode here. The engine is super linear and while not as strong as the other bikes it still has plenty of power for this kind of stuff.

KTM 300 EXC CHAMPION EDITION

MR CONSISTENT DOESN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG

If I had to pick one word for the 2025 KTM 300 EXC Champion Edition in hard enduro terrain, it'd be easy. Not the wildest, lightest or torquiest bike of the bunch, but definitely one of the easiest to ride and the most well-rounded when things get tough.

The engine is KTM's latest 293cc TBI platform, and while it might not have the instant bark of a carby bike off the bottom, it's come a long way from the early TPI days. The 72mm x 72mm bore and stroke engine is incredibly refined now. The power is strong, smooth and delivered cleanly right throughout the range. It doesn't lurch or lean out weirdly, and it won't scare you into whiskey-throttling halfway up a hill either. You can lug it low or rev it high – it works either way.

That said, I did find myself feathering the Brembo DDS hydraulic clutch just a little more than on some of the other bikes, like the Beta or Sherco. The torque is there, but not quite as tractor-like at super-low revs. Still, with a bit of clutch modulation, it'll crawl up anything. It's just not quite as eager to do it without a little coaxing.

The six-speed gearbox is spaced nicely for technical terrain, and the Keihin EFI with 39mm throttle body delivers excellent throttle response once you're moving. Injected fueling has come a long way and this bike is proof. The KTM felt easier to do hard enduro with than any previous injected 300cc two-stroke I've ridden.

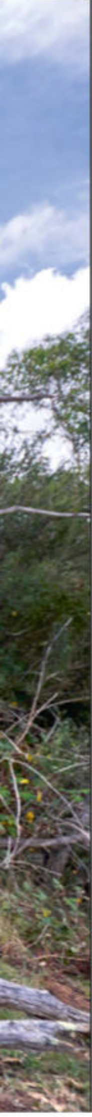
On the suspension side, the WP XACT 48mm closed cartridge fork and WP XPLOR PDS rear

shock made a solid showing in the hard enduro setting. They're firm enough to handle pace but still compliant on the loose, rocky ledges and off-camber climbs. I didn't find myself wishing for a linkage to smash in this stuff on the rear – the updated PDS feels much more planted now and tracked well up the hills. It's a good compromise between race pace and goat-track grovelling.

At 104.9kg dry, the Champion Edition is one of the lighter bikes in the group. It also has a 963mm seat height, which felt a little tall in the tight stuff, especially when dabbing through rock gardens or trying to paddle through a climb. The taller ergos are comfortable and neutral when standing, but getting a boot flat on the ground mid-slope took more commitment than I'd like.

Stopping power is excellent thanks to 260mm/220mm discs and Brembo hydraulics, and it's no surprise that the Neken 'bar and KTM's cockpit layout feel polished. Everything is where it should be. It also helps that the Champion Edition comes with a few sweet bolt-ons like a radiator fan, map switch, gripper seat and an orange bling kit to keep the factory fantasies alive.

The KTM 300 EXC Champion Edition isn't the rowdiest bike in this test, but it might just be the safest bet. It's refined, it's versatile and it does everything well without demanding much from the rider. If I had to ride one bike across every type of terrain – from fast trails to snotty gullies – I'd have a hard time looking past this one.



KTM 300 EXC Champion Edition

ENGINE

TYPE: Single-cylinder, two-stroke
DISPLACEMENT: 293.15cc
BORE AND STROKE: 72mm x 72mm
COOLING: Liquid
COMPRESSION RATIO: N/A
FUEL METERING: Keihin EFI, 39mm throttle body
TANK CAPACITY: 9L
TRANSMISSION: 6-speed
CLUTCH: Wet DDS multi-disc clutch, Brembo hydraulics

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE: 1489mm
SEAT HEIGHT: 963mm
GROUND CLEARANCE: 347mm
WEIGHT: 104.9kg (dry)

SUSPENSION

FRONT: 48mm WP XACT Closed Cartridge fork, 300mm travel
REAR: WP XPLOR monoshock with PDS, 310mm travel

BRAKES

FRONT: Brembo, hydraulic disc brake, 260mm
REAR: Brembo, hydraulic disc brake, 220mm

RUNNING GEAR

HANDLEBAR: Neken, aluminium 28/22 mm
FRONT TYRE: Michelin Enduro 90/90-21
REAR TYRE: Michelin Enduro 140/80-18

PRICE & CONTACTS

RRP: $19,775 + ORC
BROWSER: ktm.com/en-au
WARRANTY: 3 months

The KTM feels less restricted than the GASGAS

Champion Edition nails the factory look

TESTERS THOUGHTS

CHRISTIAN GIBSON

The injected engine is the biggest standout. KTM has always had a decent chassis, ergos and suspension, and this thing's so refined that it's the all-rounder of the bunch. I'm struggling to pick between this, the Beta and the Sherco for different reasons. If I had to ride one all the time in varying terrain, I'd probably go for the KTM. The suspension and the front brake are amazing and it's got really good chassis balance. And it's got more power than I'll ever need.

GRAHAM GROVENELD

I ride a KTM 300 but this new one is so much better than mine. The engine, the suspension the chassis... it's all better than my older model.

GEOFF BRAICO

It was plush in the bush, it was fine on the little motocross track and today it's excelled as well. It's got heaps of grip and the feel is incredible. It's between this, the Beta and the Sherco for me in Hard Enduro. But if I had to ride one all the time and in varying terrain, I'd probably go for the KTM.

JEFF BRIGGS

I thought the KTM produced heaps of torque for an injected engine and way more than the TPI. It can definitely work in this terrain but it lacks a little bit of the punch that the carb models do. Everything else on the bike works just as well

MITCH LEES

The KTM feels easy to ride and super smooth. The engine is linear but still quite responsive and while it did require a little more clutch on some of the hills than the Beta and Sherco did, it's still so easy to use and will never get you in trouble. The suspension and ergos are all good for this stuff and nice and neutral... but it did feel a little tall.

TM EN 300 CORSE

SO CLOSE BUT NO CIGAR

Every shootout has that bike. The one you spend the most time thinking about afterwards, not because it won, but because of how close it came and how exciting it is. For me, in this hard enduro test, that's the 2025 TM EN 300 Corse. It's exotic, it's fast, it's stunning to look at… and it's almost the full package.

Let's start with what it does brilliantly. The KYB 48mm closed-cartridge fork is superb. It's set up on the firmer side compared to some of the more trail-focused bikes here, but once you get rolling and let the suspension do its thing, it smooths out beautifully. It has 310mm of travel up front, paired with a TM Moto rear shock out back that has 300mm of travel – and together, they're extremely capable in this terrain. Despite my doubts after the race-style shootout, the TM felt more settled here. It held a line across creek beds and down rock-strewn descents without deflecting or kicking – even when I thought it might.

The 293cc carburetted engine, with a 72mm x 72mm bore and stroke, is pure Italian intensity. It's fast. Probably too fast. That high-strung mid-to-top end performance that makes it such a beast in open terrain becomes a bit of a handful when you're trying to crawl up a rocky ledge at walking pace. There's just not quite enough bottom-end torque straight off idle. I was often slipping the clutch to keep it alive or having to give it a blip just to stay in that usable part of the rev range.

To its credit, we played with the TM Moto carburettor setup in the morning – leaned it out slightly and bumped up the idle – and that helped. But even with that, it still lacked that deep-down grunt the other carby bikes like the Beta and Sherco bring to the table. If you had a heavier flywheel, lower gearing, or even swapped in a different ignition curve, it could be a different story. As it stands, you've got to ride this thing actively in the hard stuff, which might suit a more aggressive rider but wore me out faster.

The dry weight is a low 100kg, which certainly helps when things go pear-shaped, and the seat height of 985mm is about average and it feels tall due to the flatter, more race-inspired cockpit layout. This makes it harder to get your feet down but the good thing is the ground clearance is 355mm, so you're not bottoming out on logs, and the Brembo/Nissin brake combo (270mm front, 242mm rear) is

TM EN 300 Corse

ENGINE

TYPE: Single-cylinder, two-stroke with counter-balancer
DISPLACEMENT: 293.2cc
BORE AND STROKE: 72mm x 72mm
COOLING: Liquid
COMPRESSION RATIO: N/A
FUEL METERING: TM Moto carburettor
TANK CAPACITY: 8.5L (12L optional)
TRANSMISSION: 6-speed
CLUTCH: Multidisc in oil bath

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE: N/A
SEAT HEIGHT: 985mm
GROUND CLEARANCE: 355mm
WEIGHT: 100kg (dry)

SUSPENSION

FRONT: KYB 48mm closed-cartridge fork, 310mm travel
REAR: TM Moto monoshock, 300mm travel

BRAKES

FRONT: Brembo hydraulic, 270mm disc
REAR: Nissin hydraulic, 242mm disc

RUNNING GEAR

HANDLEBAR: N/A
FRONT TYRE: Maxxis MaxxEnduro 90/90-21
REAR TYRE: Maxxis MaxxEnduro 140/80-18

PRICE & CONTACTS

RRP: $18,960 + ORC
BROWSER: tmracing-aust.com.au
WARRANTY: 3 months

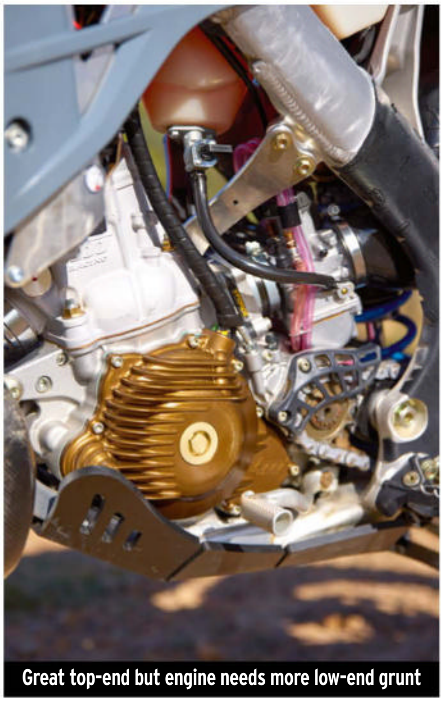
strong and predictable – a high-end touch that stands out.

The six-speed gearbox is standard fare and the wet multi-plate clutch still had issues feeling grabby under load in second gear (there's a fix for this via drilling out some holes in the clutch plates but speak to TM Australia first about what to do). The 8.5-litre tank (with an optional 12-litre tank available) is a nice detail for those planning long, wheel-spinning hard enduro loops.

It's light, responsive and incredibly well built. But for this kind of terrain, in stock form, the engine isn't as torquey off the bottom as the best hard enduro bikes in this group. It's a scalpel, not a sledgehammer. If TM can find a bit more bottom-end in this engine – or you're willing to tinker with setup and gearing – it could absolutely be a shootout winner.

Engine breathes well and the TM is super fast

TM Moto rear shock has 300mm of travel



Great top-end but engine needs more low-end grunt

TESTERS THOUGHTS

CHRISTIAN GIBSON

I'm not the heaviest guy so I just found it a little bit stiff in the initial part of the stroke. But having said that, once the bike's got momentum and you just let it run on a bit the engine will pull the bike through the creek section. I enjoyed it much more today on the soft map than I did yesterday in the fast stuff. But it's still a pro level bike. It's got so much power.

GRAHAM GROVENELD

I really liked the suspension, it felt it compliant and smooth, but the engine is lacking a little bottom-end for this stuff. External gearing might fix that, or jetting. Or maybe it needs a different gearbox.

GEOFF BRAICO

When we were trying to go slower, grovelling up steep stuff, the lack of bottom-end was noticeable. We leaned it out a bit and that was a good thing. And I turned the idle up a little bit too, which also helped to get it past that little bit of a lag off the bottom.

JEFF BRIGGS

It's a polar opposite of what I thought about it in the fast stuff. In the fast stuff I just couldn't get the flow with it, but in this technical terrain, the engine shines. And the suspension is good, and the ergos feel better at a slow pace. The engine is a touch softer off the bottom than the others in this terrain but it's plenty capable, and the chassis could be refined to make it work better in all conditions.

MITCH LEES

The TM is so close to being perfect in fast and slow stuff. If you could put the Beta Race engine in this bike it would possibly win both shootouts. It would give it the extra bottom-end power it needs and overall grunt.

SHERCO 300 SE FACTORY

THE ULTIMATE MOUNTAIN CLIMBER

If there was ever a bike that felt purpose-built for the steep, technical hell that is hard enduro, it's the Sherco 300 SE Factory. Right from the first rocky creek bed, this thing felt dialled. The engine, the balance, the suspension – it just works in this terrain. I've spent a lot of time on Betas and Austrian machines lately, but the Sherco reminded me that the French know exactly what they're doing when it comes to extreme enduro.

What stood out the most was how lazy you could be on the throttle without the bike stalling. On one of the steepest hills of the day – a slippery, off-camber climb with a gnarly log at the top – I sat in second gear and just let it chug. No bouncing off the limiter, no frantic clutch work. The 293cc two-stroke engine, with its 72mm x 72mm bore and stroke and Keihin PWK 36mm carburettor, just grunted its way to the top like it was no big deal. The VForce4R reed valve system helps keep that bottom-end clean and punchy, and the SBS electronically-controlled power valve smooths the power delivery right through the rev range.

That power is backed up by an excellent chassis and KYB suspension combo. The 48mm closed-cartridge fork and 50mm KYB shock strike that rare balance between being firm enough for pace but still responsive at low speed. With 300mm of fork travel and a whopping 330mm at the rear, it soaks up sharp rock hits without ever feeling mushy or wallowy. The chassis is compact and measures 1480mm in wheelbase, which makes it feel agile in tight switchbacks and gullies. Ground clearance is 355mm,

so I wasn't clipping logs or getting hung up on anything I didn't want to be. And while the seat 950mm height isn't as low as the Beta, the bike never felt too tall – it's well-balanced and lets you dab when you need to.

Now, if I had to nitpick, the seat foam is on the firmer side. Normally, that's not something I even notice when I'm on the 'pegs. But in this kind of terrain, where you're sitting and paddling a lot, that harder seat gets your attention pretty quickly. It's a small trade-off though for a bike that feels so planted and confidence-inspiring in hard terrain.

Braking is handled by Brembo hydraulics with Galfer discs – 260mm up front and 220mm at the rear – and as expected, they're powerful and progressive.

The 10-litre tank gives you decent range and the Michelin Enduro Medium tyres (90/90-21 front and 140/80-18 rear) did well for FIM-approved rubber. The bike is also fitted with an expansion tank and radiator fan, which gives peace of mind when the going gets really slow and gnarly.

What impressed me most about the Sherco was how confidence-inspiring it was. It doesn't feel like a bike that's trying to throw you off or ask too much of you. It just gets on with the job. Between the torquey engine, excellent carburetion and firm suspension, this bike is an absolute weapon in hard enduro. It's in that top tier alongside the Beta and KTM for me – and might even have the edge on the steepest climbs.

Sherco SE 300 Factory

ENGINE

TYPE: Single-cylinder, two-stroke, SBS electronically-controlled exhaust valve
DISPLACEMENT: 293.14cc
BORE AND STROKE: 72mm x 72mm
COOLING: Liquid
COMPRESSION RATIO: N/A
FUEL METERING: 36 mm Keihin PWK carburettor with VForce4 reed valve
TANK CAPACITY: 10L
TRANSMISSION: 6-speed
CLUTCH: Brembo hydraulic multi-disc in oil bath

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE: 1480mm
SEAT HEIGHT: 950mm
GROUND CLEARANCE: 355mm
WEIGHT: N/A

SUSPENSION

FRONT: KYB 48mm closed-cartridge fork, 300mm travel
REAR: KYB 50mm monoshock, 330mm travel

BRAKES

FRONT: Brembo hydraulic, 260mm Galfer disc
REAR: Brembo hydraulic, 220mm Galfer disc

RUNNING GEAR

Handlebar: N/A
FRONT TYRE: Michelin Enduro Medium 90/90-21
REAR TYRE: Michelin Enduro Medium 140/80-18

PRICE & CONTACTS

RRP: $16,799 + ORC
BROWSER: sherco.com.au
WARRANTY: 3 months

950mm seat height but it never felt too tall

There's a whopping 330mm of travel at the rear

TESTERS THOUGHTS

CHRISTIAN GIBSON

I was super impressed with this bike's bottom-end. It just doesn't quit up in this terrain. I could carry third up nasty hills, and I couldn't do that on any other bike. I just sat off the back in third gear with my finger just on the clutch lever and it would just go and go and go. It's amazing how well it climbs.

GRAHAM GROVENELD

It runs a little bit rich. You've gotta keep cleaning it out when you're constantly on low revs. But it's super tractable through in this terrain and up the hills. It is probably the most comfortable bike for me – it's just so balanced, so planted.

GEOFF BRAICO

It has a very similar feel to the Beta. I find it hard to pick between the Sherco, Beta and KTM because the engines are so strong for this stuff and the chassis are so easy to throw around. I feel like they're the ones that have focused on the extreme stuff over the years.

JEFF BRIGGS

Like the Beta, the power on the Sherco is really predictable. The seat is a bit hard with that new subframe and doing this slow technical stuff, you're sitting down a lot compared to faster trail riding when you're up and down off the seat.

MITCH LEES

It' hard to pick between the Sherco and the Beta. They are both so similar in engine characteristics with great bottom-ends and incredible torque all the way through the rev range. The Sherco has excellent engine response so you can blip the throttle and wheelie over anything. The suspension, while firm, still works in the technical stuff.

HUSQVARNA TE 250 HERITAGE

THE UNDERDOG THAT COULD HAVE BEEN TOP DOG

It might be the only 250 in the test, but the Husqvarna TE 250 Heritage Edition punched well above its weight in the rocks. Like we explained last issue in the trail/race shootout, Husqvarna Australia didn't have a 300 we could use so we grabbed a 250 instead. In fact, if I didn't know the engine size going in, I probably wouldn't have picked it as the smaller-capacity bike. It's light, nimble and super easy to manoeuvre, and I expected the smaller engine to be more noticeable in the hard enduro terrain we tested on, but it wasn't.

The engine is the same 249cc fuel-injected two-stroke as last year, with a 66.4mm bore and 72mm stroke, and it's honestly one of the cleanest-running EFI engines in the bunch. Husky uses the Keihin EFI with a 39mm throttle body, and it's smooth and responsive, especially when left in the aggressive map. That's what I ended up running most of the day – not because the engine isn't torquey, but because as a heavier rider with all my gear on, I wanted every ounce of bottom-end I could get when crawling up the steepest rock steps. The wet DDS clutch and Brembo hydraulics feel the lightest here and let me feather the power in low-speed climbs without any chatter or fade.

What impressed me most was the chassis feel and agility. It's built around the same central double-cradle-type steel frame as the 300, with a wheelbase of 1489mm, but it just feels easier to move around. The Pro Taper 'bar, seat height of 952mm and dry weight of 107kg help it feel easy to handle in awkward gullies.

Suspension is sorted via a WP XACT cartridge 48mm fork and a WP XACT monoshock with linkage – both offering 300mm of travel. I didn't need to touch the clickers all day. The fork is supple off the top, holds up well under load, and the shock gave me great traction when crawling through the creek's loose rocks. Ground clearance is 343mm, which is low compared to some of the others, but I didn't find myself dragging the belly in any of the rougher sections.

Now sure, compared to the 300s, the Husky TE 250 isn't quite as

Husqvarna TE 250 Heritage

ENGINE

TYPE: Single-cylinder, two-stroke
DISPLACEMENT: 249cc
BORE AND STROKE: 66.4mm x 72.0mm
COOLING: Liquid
COMPRESSION RATIO: N/A
FUEL METERING: Keihin EFI, 39mm throttle body
TANK CAPACITY: 8.5L
TRANSMISSION: 6-speed
CLUTCH: Wet DDS multi-disc clutch, Brembo hydraulics

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE: 1489mm
SEAT HEIGHT: 952mm
GROUND CLEARANCE: 343mm
WEIGHT: 107kg (dry)

SUSPENSION

FRONT: WP 48mm XACT cartridge fork, 300mm travel
REAR: WP XACT monoshock with linkage, 300mm travel

BRAKES

FRONT: Brembo, hydraulic disc brake, 260mm
REAR: Brembo, hydraulic disc brake, 220mm

RUNNING GEAR

HANDLEBAR: Pro Taper aluminium 28/22 mm
FRONT TYRE: Michelin Enduro 90/90-21
REAR TYRE: Michelin Enduro 140/80-18

PRICE & CONTACTS

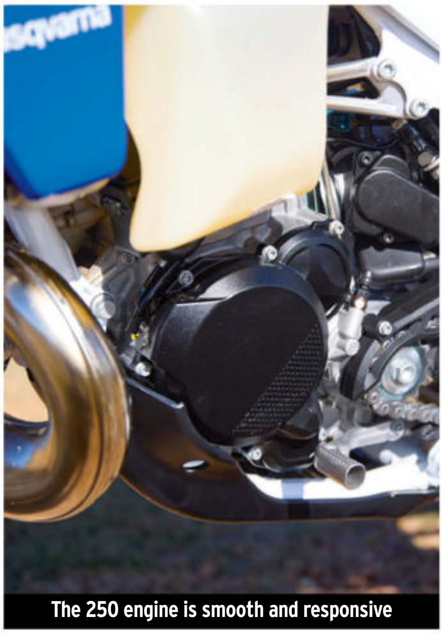
RRP: $16,695 + ORC
BROWSER: husqvarna-motorcycles.com/en-au
WARRANTY: 3 months

strong off the bottom, and that meant I had to work the clutch a bit more in the steepest climbs, but the upside is that it never gets away from you. The throttle is incredibly predictable, the Brembo brakes (260mm front, 220mm rear) are strong, and the 8.5-litre tank gives you enough fuel for a solid session in the hills.

Honestly, I'd love to ride this exact chassis with a 300 engine because the platform is that good. But for riders who value agility, finesse and confidence over outright grunt, the TE 250 Heritage is a serious weapon in the hard enduro world. It's not the most powerful bike here, but it's definitely one of the easiest to ride and that means a lot when you're flogged in this stuff.

Husky offers easy access for mapping changes

If we had the 300 it could have won



The 250 engine is smooth and responsive

TESTERS THOUGHTS

CHRISTIAN GIBSON

This is my second favourite bike of the day. It's not lacking power for my level of riding, it's not lacking any bottom-end at all. Even coming out of the creek at the top in second gear, it's got the same amount of pop to lift the front wheel as any of the other bikes for me.

GRAHAM GROVENELD

I agree with Christian with the nimbleness of this bike. If it was a 300, you'd have that bottom-end to make going through the creek a piece of cake. It just feels more planted through there.

GEOFF BRAICO

This is supposed to be the premium option, but of course it's a 250. I actually thought the Husky was pretty good through the creek compared to the 300. In some ways it's easier because it feels a little bit lighter. If the Husky was a 300, I think it would be very, very hard to pick between this and the KTM.

JEFF BRIGGS

I like how nimble this bike feels and I didn't notice the lack of power that much. The suspension works well in the hard stuff but I had to leave it in the aggressive map to make the power up.

MITCH LEES

Like the last shootout, I'd love to ride this bike in the 300 version because with a little more bottom-end, bigger guys like me would find it so strong. The chassis and suspension felt fine for this stuff and the engine is so easy to use, but for a bloke over 100kg with gear on, the 250 needs a little more poke.

2025
300cc
TWO-STROKE
HARD ENDURO

WINNER, WINNER!

THE KING OF THE CRAWL

After a full day of dragging bikes, stalling bikes and occasionally swearing at bikes on some of the steepest, nastiest terrain on the east coast, we had a winner. And while this was one of the closest shootouts we've done, the Beta RR 300 X-Pro came out on top!

What clinched it? That punchy, torquey engine, soft suspension and, most importantly in hard enduro, the low seat height. Being able to get a boot on the ground when you're half sideways on an off-camber climb is invaluable, and the Beta's ergonomics just made it easier to survive the toughest sections. Add to that some of the cleanest jetting and torque delivery of the bunch, and it just did everything right when things got sketchy.

In second – and I mean ridiculously close – was the Sherco 300 SE Factory. On another day, this might've been the bike to beat. It's got the same kind of strong, grunty engine that loves lugging, and the throttle response is sharp enough to blip over obstacles without upsetting the chassis. But where the Beta felt just that bit more forgiving, the Sherco was slightly firmer in the suspension and a little taller in the seat, which tipped the scales when the terrain got awkward. Still, if you're a taller or more aggressive rider, the Sherco is seriously hard to go past.

The Beta edged out the KTM

Third place went to the KTM 300 EXC Champion Edition, a bike that continues to impress with how easy it is to ride. From the featherlight clutch to the smooth TBI engine and sorted WP suspension, the KTM is like the smart kid in school who always does everything right. It might not have quite the same low-down thump as the carb bikes, but it's a seriously well-rounded machine that works everywhere.

The Husqvarna TE 250 Heritage surprised everyone with how competitive it was in the technical terrain. Yes, it's a 250, but it rarely felt underpowered thanks to how nimble and manageable it is. A TE 300 version of this exact bike could absolutely be in the running next year.

The GASGAS EC 300 won plenty of fans for its plush suspension and low-stress power delivery. It lacks a bit of the punch and spec that you want in the real hard stuff. Still, with some mods (bashplate, handguards, map switch), it could absolutely level up.

The Fantic XE 300 showed promise, particularly with its quality KYB suspension and lightweight feel. But in this slow-speed, technical environment, it struggled a bit with bottom-end torque and the five-speed gearbox made gearing for climbs tricky. A heavier flywheel or mapping update could help.

Finally, the TM EN 300 Corse remains the exotic dark horse – beautiful to look at and with a chassis and suspension setup that's ready for battle. But it still needs some refining in the power-delivery department for slow-speed work. The engine is potent, but lacks the low-down grunt of the Beta.

So there it is. Another epic day of bike testing, bruised egos, glowing exhausts and a clear winner in the Beta 300 X-Pro. But this is hard enduro – where balance and low-end grunt beat outright horsepower. And on that note, we've never had a field this tight! ADB

Got something to say about this yarn?
Let us know at adbmag@adbmag.com.au

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WORDS // **MITCH LEES** PHOTOS // **SUZUKI AMERICA**

Doctor's ORDERS

ADB ED MITCH LEES TRAVELS TO THE OREGON TRAIL IN THE LAND OF THE FREE TO TEST THE ALL-NEW SUZUKI DR-Z4S.

No one's going to miss that Champion Yellow No. 2

New digital display is easy to read

For aggressive riding a stiffer spring might be in order

If there's one thing that gets Aussie trail riders misty-eyed with nostalgia it's a yellow DR-Z caked in dust, idling patiently on the edge of some fire trail in the high country. For over two decades, the Suzuki DR-Z400E has been Australia's go-to bush basher. It's earned cult status among weekend warriors, farmers and learners alike – praised for its tractor-like reliability and old-school simplicity. But now, in a move that feels as much like the end of an era as it does the start of a new one, Suzuki has rolled out something fresh. Not a replacement, mind you, but a sibling: the 2026 DR-Z4S.

To see this new dual-sport in its natural habitat, Suzuki didn't just ship us to any random patch of dirt – the company flew us halfway across the globe to Portland, Oregon, to launch the DR-Z4S where rugged trails and moody skies meet. There, just three weeks out from the American summer, the mercury barely crept above 15°C, and a grey ceiling hung low over the pines – classic Pacific Northwest. The trail was pristine, groomed like a golf course fairway with a fair bit of singletrack, fire road and bitumen. The perfect playground for a dual-sport that wants to be more than just a road-legal trailbike.

The DR-Z4S isn't trying to out-E the DR-Z400E. It's not the next evolution of the Aussie-loved bush tank. Instead, it's a proper dual-sport. More refined, more road-friendly, and tech'd up with the kind of features that didn't exist when the E first arrived in dealerships. The DR-Z4S has a fuel-injected engine, traction control, switchable ABS and even ride modes – things the DR-Z400E wouldn't recognise if it ran over them.

And Suzuki knows its audience. It's not turfing the E. At least not yet. Both bikes will sit side-by-side in the lineup, giving riders the choice between the barebones simplicity of the E and the versatility and polish of the 4S. Think of the DR-Z4S as the adventure-savvy cousin who wears Gore-Tex and knows how to sync a helmet Bluetooth, while the DR-Z400E is still out there in the bush wearing a flanno jersey, kicking logs and loving life.

It's small but headlight is bright

Suzuki's proven you can put smart tech on a dirtbike without turning it into a gadget-fest

But that's not to say the 4S has gone soft. Underneath the slick new plastics and electronic trickery, there's still a 398cc single-cylinder engine beating away, ready to belt its way through whatever terrain you throw under it. It's just… more evolved. And it had to be. Emissions regulations, rider expectations and road versatility don't leave much room for 1990s tech anymore.

So here it is. A modern-day DR-Z, born from a legend, tested on the Oregon Trail and headed for Australia in Q3 2025. And from what we've experienced, it might just bring a whole new generation into the DR cult.

WHAT'S NEW

The 2026 Suzuki DR-Z4S brings more than just a new badge. This is a full-blown overhaul, and unlike the DR-Z400E – which remains carburetted – the 4S steps into the future with a slew of upgrades designed to make it both compliant and competitive in today's dual-sport market.

At the heart of it all is a re-engineered 398cc DOHC single-cylinder engine now fed via a fuel injection system that includes 10-hole injectors for improved atomisation. This delivers better combustion, sharper throttle response, and easier cold starts than the carb model. You'll also find dual spark plugs and lightweight titanium intake valves helping fine-tune the performance and efficiency. A new exhaust system with a dual-stage catalytic converter ensures it meets strict Euro 5+ emissions regs.

Solid Iron Grey looks classy but a bit more road

Adjustable KYB suspension

Rear is also rebound and compression adjustable

The old steel frame is gone, replaced by a new twin-spar pipe steel chassis that prioritises both rigidity and feel. Handling is further refined now via all-new KYB long-travel adjustable suspension front and rear – finally giving DR-Z fans the option to dial in damping to suit the terrain. Braking is handled by bigger front and rear discs, and yes, there's switchable ABS on both ends.

The ride-by-wire throttle unlocks the DR-Z4S's electronic assist suite, known as S.I.R.S. (Suzuki Intelligent Ride System). This includes Suzuki Drive Mode Selector (SDMS) – offering four different throttle maps depending on terrain and rider preference and a four way Suzuki Traction Control System (STCS) – with a Gravel mode specifically tuned for off-road conditions.

Visually, the 4S gets the kind of styling overhaul Suzuki fans have been begging for. LED lighting all around, from the projector-style headlight to integrated indicators. The LCD dash is compact but readable, and the seat and 'bar have been reshaped for better ergonomics, using a tapered alloy 'bar to soak up vibration.

Available in Solid Iron Grey or a throwback combo of Champion Yellow No. 2 and Solid Special White No. 2, the DR-Z4S wears its heritage proudly.

Interestingly, the five-speed gearbox remains with a 15-tooth countershaft sprocket and a 43-tooth rear sprocket.

OUT ON THE TRAIL

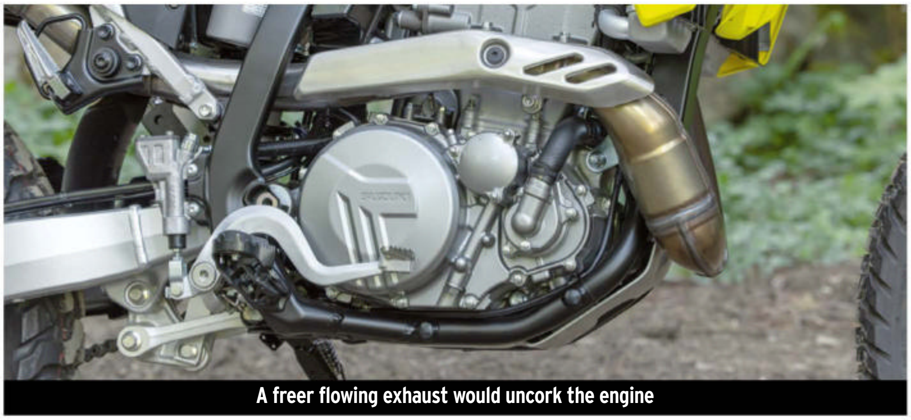
If you're wondering how the new DR-Z4S actually rides, the short answer is: better than expected. A lot better. This is no styling exercise slapped on a 20-year-old chassis – it's a legitimately new platform that still feels familiar but finally rides like it belongs in 2025.

Let's start with the engine. It's the same 398cc capacity as the DR-Z400E, but it's smoother, quieter and – importantly – more powerful across the rev range. It's not as aggressive or punchy when you open the throttle, but there's a strong, linear pull that builds confidently and doesn't drop off when you need it. Compared to the E, it's a step up in both usable torque and top-end performance, but it's less barky and way more manageable. It feels like Suzuki deliberately tuned it to suit dual-sport riders: tractable enough for technical stuff and singletrack but with enough legs to stretch out on fire roads or the highway.

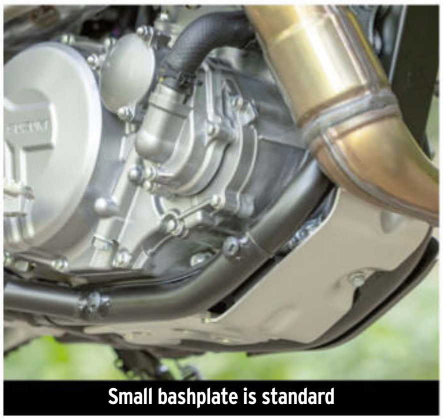
That said, the engine feels a little corked. It needs the airbox opened up and a freer-flowing pipe to really wake it up. The fuelling is good out of the box, and the throttle is crisp thanks to the new ride-by-wire system, but you can feel there's more in there waiting to be uncorked. Oh, and the claims of the new clutch being 25 per cent lighter are spot on, it felt almost as light as a hydraulic unit, much lighter than the Yamaha WR clutch. The levers are agricultural and could do with an update to make them smaller and more contoured.

Gearing sparked a bit of a debate on day one. At first, it felt like it had six gears. The ratios are wide, and fifth is tall enough to cruise comfortably at 110km/h. But no – five gears, just smart spacing. First gear idles along at about 7km/h clutch-out, so it's low enough for standard singletrack that's not too technical. I spent a lot of time in second on the Oregon singletrack,

The ABS is swtichable



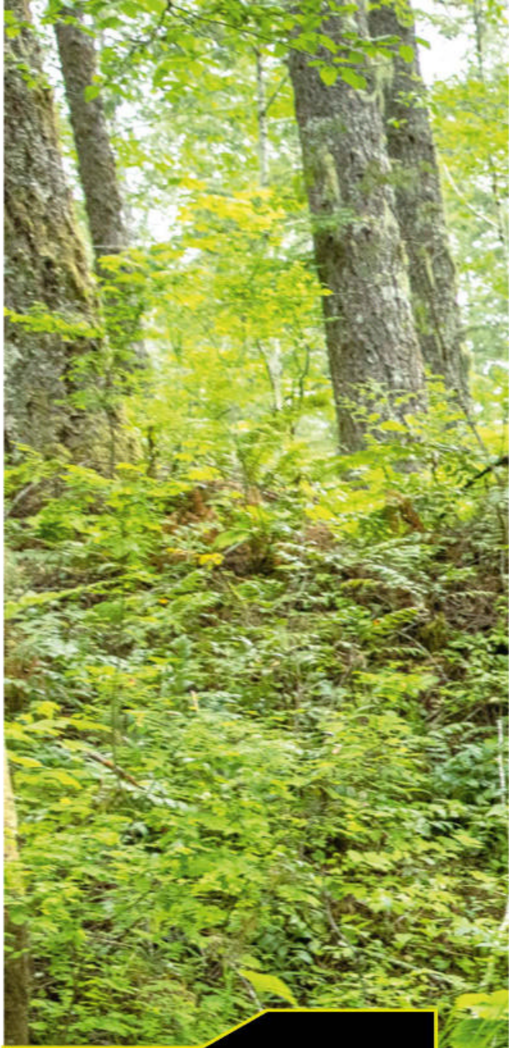
A freer flowing exhaust would uncork the engine


Small bashplate is standard

The rider modes make a big difference

The exhaust is muted

Footpegs have decent teeth but lose the inserts



and it was well-suited for the flowing, grippy terrain. If you plan to spend all your time crawling through the Aussie bush, you might consider dropping a tooth on the front sprocket. Otherwise, I'd leave it stock – it's a good balance for the mixed-use this bike is built for. Just don't expect to crawl up snotty hillclimbs in first without having to ride the clutch.

The chassis is a real highlight. It feels narrower between the legs than the DR-Z400E and lighter on the move – even if the scales suggest otherwise. The new frame geometry and slimmer bodywork give the 4S a modern, agile feel. It turns in quicker, changes direction more naturally, and feels far less top-heavy when picking lines or standing on the 'pegs.

Suspension is another major leap forward. The KYB gear is stiffer than the old bike, particularly in the front, and offers far better support under braking and on chop. The rear shock is a bit softer than ideal – especially for heavier riders or loaded setups – but it's not wallowy. For everyday trail work and dual-sport exploring, the balance is right. For more aggressive riding, a stiffer spring might be in order, and if you plan on loading it up to adventure ride, you will definitely need a heavier shock spring.

The fat 'bar is a welcome addition, soaking up vibration and offering more leverage and control while having a little more flex. Like I said, the clutch action is noticeably lighter, making technical riding or long stints in traffic far less fatiguing. The bigger brakes are stronger and more predictable, and now that they're paired with switchable ABS front and rear you've got far more control on varied surfaces.

Then there's the electronics – and this is where the DR-Z4S punches way above its class. It's rare that rider modes and traction control are worth getting excited about on a dirtbike, but Suzuki nailed it. They don't just work – they work well. I can't believe I'm saying that.

For experienced riders, Map A with TC off is the go-to. It gives you the most direct throttle and no intervention. This is just like riding a traditional dirtbike without any fancy electronic trickery. For newer

Suzuki DR-Z4S

ENGINE

TYPE Four-stroke, single-cylinder, liquid-cooled, DOHC
DISPLACEMENT 398cc
BORE X STROKE 90.0mm x 62.6mm
COMPRESSION RATIO 11.11
FUEL SYSTEM Fuel injection
STARTER SYSTEM Electric
LUBRICATION SYSTEM Dry sump
GEARBOX 5-speed constant mesh

DIMENSIONS

WHEELBASE 1490mm
GROUND CLEARANCE 300mm
SEAT HEIGHT 920mm
WET WEIGHT 151kg
FUEL TANK 8.7 litres

SUSPENSION

FRONT SUSPENSION KYB Inverted telescopic, coil spring, oil damped
REAR SUSPENSION KYB Link type, coil spring, oil damped

BRAKES & TYRES

FRONT BRAKE 270mm Disc, switchable ABS
REAR BRAKE 280mm Disc, switchable ABS
FRONT TYRE 80/100-21, IRC Tyre
REAR TYRE 120/80-18, IRC Tyre

PRICE & CONTACTS

RRP TBA
BROWSER suzukimotorcycles.com.au
WARRANTY TBA

THE NITTY GRITTY

There is so much new on this DR-Z4s it is impossible to squeeze all the changes into this yarn so here are the other all-new intricate details I left out.

- Lightweight aluminium seat rails and swingarm.
- Revised engine internals including new piston, crankcase, cam profiles, combustion chamber and port design for improved torque, power and efficiency.
- Dual iridium spark plugs boost combustion efficiency, throttle response, fuel economy and idle stability.
- Titanium intake valves and hollow sodium-filled exhaust valves reduce weight.
- New 42mm ride-by-wire throttle body makes the 4S compliant with Euro 5+ standards.
- Larger radiator and fan for better cooling capacity.
- Suzuki Clutch Assist System (SCAS) is why the clutch is lighter and smoother during downshifts.
- ABS unit by Bosch.
- 280mm front and 296mm rear KYB suspension travel, fully adjustable with compression and rebound damping.
- Axial-mount brake calipers with bigger discs.
- Tapered aluminium handlebars with half-waffle grips.
- New, softer, lower, narrower seat.
- Reshaped fuel tank.
- Standard aluminium bashplate.
- Wider footpegs.
- Lockable, side-mounted toolbox for easy access to tools and the owner's manual.
- New parallelogram-style mirrors.
- Bright LED lighting system includes projector headlight, integrated turn signal/position lights and compact rear combination light.
- New full LCD dash provides real-time system info including traction, ABS and mode settings.
- Ergonomic switchgear allows mode selection and adjustment without removing hands from the 'bar.

So here it is. A modern-day DR-Z, born from a legend

riders, Map C with Gravel mode is confidence-inspiring without being intrusive. And if you're riding in the wet – on tar or dirt – Map B or C with TC1 or TC2 takes the edge off without neutering the bike.

The difference between modes is significant – arguably more noticeable than on some $25k adventure bikes. The traction control is smoother and more intuitive than what I've experienced on comparable small-bore adventure machines and, crucially, it's easy to switch off if you don't want it. The Gravel mode TC is impressive, most hardcore dirt guys won't use it but that doesn't mean they shouldn't. The only time it got in the way was if tearing along singletrack, flying uphill and needing a little punch to loft the front wheel over a rock ledge or tree root. It just wouldn't hook the rear wheel up quite as easy as when it was off. I could still get the front wheel off the ground, just not as abruptly. But where it was cool was that if I stopped and started again on a steep hill and tried to wheel spin, it retarded the rear wheel just enough to get more traction than if it was off. It still did a burn out but got a little more traction than when I turned it off and tried the same thing.

The system adds genuine value without making the bike feel like a computer on wheels. Suzuki's proven you can put smart tech on a dirtbike without turning it into a gadget-fest. Scrolling through TC and the engine maps can be done on the fly when the throttle is shut but you will need to be stopped to switch ABS on or off or on on the front and off on the rear.

As for the finer details – they've mostly nailed them. The airbox is easy to access from the side and hides a handy little toolkit behind it (the lunchbox on the back is gone!). The new headlight, while it looks a little odd, is properly bright, not just road-legal filler, and is actually usable on late night trips into country towns. The footpegs, grips and levers are comfortable, well-spaced-out (you'll need to remove the rubber inserts from the footpegs). Even the LCD dash is clean and legible, with everything you need at a glance and nothing you don't.

The only real letdown? The stock tyres. They're absolute puss. IRC dual-purpose rubber that feels like it was picked more for the bitumen than the dirt. Swap them before your first serious trail ride – they'll hold you back more than any other component.

HOW IT STACKS UP

In terms of rivals, I think the DR-Z4S goes toe-to-toe with the Honda CRF450RL and Kawasaki KLX450R. On paper, they all fill a similar niche as easy-to-ride trailbikes, but the Suzuki stands out in a few key ways thanks to its dual-sport prowess.

It's easier to ride, with a more manageable power curve and friendlier ergonomics. It's better equipped with electronics that actually make a difference. It should be cheaper (price is TBA but we expect it to be around $14,900 ride away) and it delivers better fuel economy, which matters when you're covering long distances or riding remote.

The Kawasaki KLX450R might have a slight edge in hardcore enduro performance, but for the average trail rider or dual-sport adventurer, the DR-Z4S is the most complete package – and the one that's least likely to tire you out or empty your wallet.

WORTH THE WAIT?

Suzuki could have phoned this one in. It could have slapped a headlight on the old E, fuel-injected the engine and called it a day. But it didn't. It delivered a dual-sport that feels fresh, focused and actually exciting to ride. It doesn't try to be an enduro bike or an adventure bike – it carves out its own lane, and it does so with a solid motor, firmer suspension and a surprising amount of tech.

The DR-Z4S might not be for every rider, especially hardcore dirt guys. But for a hell of a lot of riders buying high-powered 450cc enduro bikes and complaining about fatigue every time they ride, or struggling to hang on when the terrain gets steep or fast, it's exactly what they've been waiting for. Give it a go! ADB

Got something to say about this yarn?
Let us know at adbmag@adbmag.com.au

In terms of rivals, the DR-Z4S goes toe-to-toe with the Honda CRF450RL and Kawasaki KLX450R

New seat is softer and lower

Rear shock linkage looks tidy

RXT
HELMETS

OFF ROAD TECHNOLOGY

Matt Black/Red

Gloss Black/Blue

Gloss Black/Fluro

- Ultra Flow Ventilation System
- Large Eye port to accept large frame goggles
- Adjustable Peak
- Double D Rings
- Lightweight ABS Construction
- 3D Fully Washable / Removable Liner
- AS/NZS 1698 Standards Approved

Gloss Black/Magenta

RRP $129.95

SECTOR WRAITH

Matt Black

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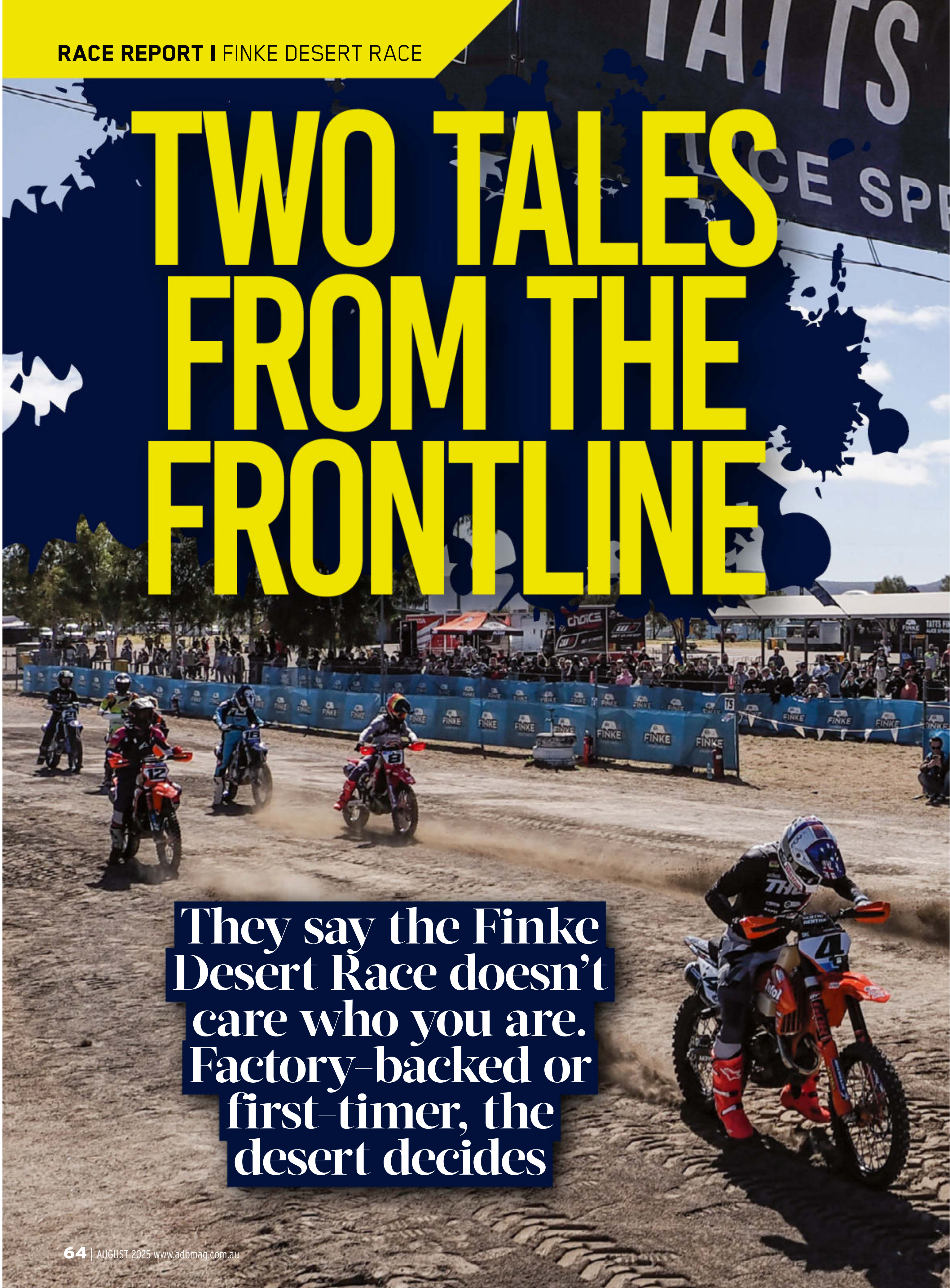
TWO TALES FROM THE FRONTLINE



They say the Finke Desert Race doesn't care who you are. Factory-backed or first-timer, the desert decides

WORDS // **MATT BERNARD** PHOTOS // **FINKE OFFICIAL AND BEAU DOCHERTY**

FINKE DESERT RACE
RINGS | START FINISH LINE
Lott
Tatts
XXXX
ALICE SPRINGS TOWN COUNCIL
FINKE
METHOD
TAB
Lasseters

The Finke can be a family affair

It's now riders hope they have everything sorted

Lining up for the Prologue

The Tatts Finke Desert Race is the gnarliest, most dangerous off-road race on the Australian calendar… and that's exactly why it's the one everyone dreams of. A 460km out-and-back sprint through the brutal heart of the Northern Territory, from Alice Springs to Aputula (Finke) and back, across terrain so violent it can break even the most hardened riders. Speeds hit over 170km/h. The whoops stretch for kilometres. The danger? Always one mistake away. And still, they keep coming back.

You need plenty of tape for the Finke

JEO FABRICATION
159
BEAU DOCHERTY
UNIFILTER
ACERBIS
PROTAPER
JHBUILT
RITE BEND
MotoKit

Desert workshop

Beau Docherty contemplates his Finke run

Trackside repairs on that flat tyre

In 2025, two very different riders lined up in Alice Springs, both chasing the same dream. One, a 17-year-old, Beau Docherty from mid-western New South Wales, fresh-faced and wide-eyed, tackling his very first Finke with his family, a caravan and some family friends. The other, a gritty privateer, Corey Hammond – a quiet achiever who, five years after finishing 40th in his Finke debut, came back determined to write a new chapter.

This is their story.

THE ROOKIE: BEAU'S BIG LEAP

Beau's KTM got the love it needed: fresh rebuild, long-range tank, desert seat, steering damper, high gearing, Steg Pegz, and a full custom graphics kit from Moto Kit which was littered in all local businesses from Rylstone, NSW… even the local butcher and the pub were featured! Suspension was tuned by Terry from Shock Treatment plus the all-important spanner time with Dad.

Prepping the bike before heading off

> **“I am grateful for all the local people who have given me sheds to work from, volunteers at the fuel stops as it's really a team effort.”**

“It's always been a bucket list thing,” Beau says. “Dad and I started chatting about it and figured why not? Let's make a trip out of it.”

So, they did. “We shook the bike down at Louee before we left, just to make sure everything was ready,” Beau explains. After that, Beau, his family and a convoy of friends set off from Rylstone in the caravan, chasing a dream across the country. They made a three-day journey out of it, winding through the dusty veins of inland Australia, checking off desert campsites, fuel stops and campfire yarns – all while the anticipation built with every kilometre. “We had my family and my Dad's friend Josh, his wife and two girls travelling together, so we made it in roughly six-hour trips each day,” Beau says. “We stopped near Port Augusta and were able to have a good afternoon riding there, and then at Coober Pedy we did a bit of sightseeing.”

“We camped at the track and did a couple of days of pre-running once we got there,” Beau says. “It gave us a feel for the terrain and helped fine-tune the bike.” At night, the crew would talk tactics around campfires and work through final bike prep by torchlight. It was a holiday on the outside, but for Beau, it was the lead-up to the biggest race of his life. Beau's Finke kicked off with a promising Prologue.

“I took off in a group of three, got the holeshot, but ran out of gearing. Got a good time, though,” he says casually.

Day 1? It was a baptism of fire. The nerves hit early that morning. “Just standing there, waiting to be called up – it was surreal,” Beau remembers. “Bikes were already screaming off the line, helicopters buzzing overhead. I'd watched it and read about it and suddenly I was in it. Heart going a million miles an hour.” Despite some early drama, Beau battled through the whoops, dust and chaos to complete the first leg. He rolled into Finke camp – exhausted, relieved and still very much in the race.

“Dad dropped me at the start line. I was grid position 127. A few kays in, I copped a flat. I managed to get to the 25km mark where Josh and his family were camped, we ripped the wheel off Josh's bike and chucked it on mine. Then I just started pushing.”

Chasing dust, dodging bikes, adrenaline surging. Finke doesn't wait. The whoops are relentless, the terrain ever-changing. Beau pressed on. Every corner could be the end of the race – or the next challenge. As Beaurolled into Finke camp, he tried to fire up the bike. Nothing. The

starter motor was cooked.

"Dad had to push me while Lizzy drove the ute," Beau laughs. "Later we found the bearings had flogged out in the starter motor. We couldn't fix it – just roll start it."

It was the kind of problem that ends races. But not this one. Come Day 2, Beau lined up 199th after the flat tyre setback, and just started chasing the riders ahead.

"It was way smoother, much faster on the way back. I was just passing people the whole way back."

He crossed the finish line in two hours and 40 minutes, 81st for the day and fifth in class. As he rolled down the final stretch, dust-caked and drained, he could hear the cheers of his family and friends waiting near the finish chute. The same friends and family he'd travelled across the country with were jumping up and down, and plenty of people at home in Rylstone were watching live on YouTube. His final result? 126th overall. Eighth in class. And a finish line story he'll tell forever. On the way home, they made sure to wind down and soak it all in – stopping for a couple of days at Uluṟu, reflecting on the chaos they'd just lived through.

"It was the most challenging race I've ever done. But yeah, I'll be back. Just need a bit of training, a new bike build, and some money saving!"

> ***The Tatts Finke Desert Race is the gnarliest, most dangerous off-road race on the Australian calendar, and that's exactly why it's the one everyone dreams of.***

THE CLIMB TO THE CROWN

The 2025 edition also marked a major shift in the Finke landscape. Five-time King of the Desert and Alice Springs local, David Walsh, announced his retirement from racing just weeks before the event. The KTM legend dominated Finke with five consecutive wins from 2019 to 2024 and his absence left a noticeable void in the front pack. "What a wild ride it has been over the past 16 years of racing," Walsh said. "I never thought I could win the Finke Desert Race, let alone five in a row."

While stepping away from racing, Walsh has stayed involved in the sport through a mentorship role in the newly-formed STE KTM Racing Team, supporting the likes of Callum Norton and his cousin Liam Walsh, who was unfortunately ruled out of the 2025 event due to injury in the lead-up.

Corey Hammond had flown under the radar

His retirement didn't just shift expectations, it helped crack the door open for a new chapter to be written.

While Beau was living every high and low of a Finke debut, up the track another story was unfolding.

Corey Hammond had flown under the radar. No factory setup, just a KTM 500 EXC-F, support from Sutto's Powersports and a host of businesses and family, and years of quiet preparation. After finishing 40th in his first Finke, he'd spent half a decade learning the line, chasing

time and tuning his approach – watching legends like Walsh dominate the desert while quietly crafting his own run at glory, in 2024 Hammond crossed the line just off the podium in fourth.

What most didn't see were the seasons spent returning to Alice, riding the track solo, burning through fuel and tyres just to get dialled. The failed attempts, the volunteer support, the financial expense… all of it was part of the process. Corey knew the bumps before he hit them. He could feel the flow, knew where to push and where to respect the desert's bite.

When STE Racing KTM favourite Callum Norton withdrew after battling a virus on Day 1, the door cracked even further open. Early on the return leg, Honda's Brodie Waters was running strong in second, pushing hard to keep the pressure on Hammond, until a massive crash nearly ended his race. The impact damaged his Honda CRF450R and forced him to back off and limp home, opening the path for Campbell Hall to move into second. The young Dubbo, NSW rider had quietly impressed throughout the weekend. Just outside the top 10 in 2024, Hall returned hungrier and more refined. Riding with a maturity beyond his years, he stayed consistent, avoided drama and pounced when the moment came. His second-place finish marked his first Finke podium, and a sign that there's a new generation ready to challenge for the crown.

It was another reminder of how quickly the desert can punish even

XXXX
COMPETITION TRACK MARKERS
CLUB FUEL STOP 2 200M
FUEL STOP 2
GATE
170

You don't want to forget what any of these mean

Campbell Hall finished second for his first podium

Brodie Waters was charging hard

the best. With Norton out and Waters wounded, Corey Hammond seized his moment. He stayed calm, rode clean and stretched his lead with every kilometre. He led both days, racing smooth and smart, avoiding mistakes in conditions that ended others' races.

At the finish line, the numbers said it all: three hours, 46 minutes and 30.16 seconds. A 10-minute margin. One of the most dominant Finke wins in years.

"This really is a dream come true and having a decent gap was nice, rather than seconds on the run home," he said.

"I have spent a lot of time up here learning the track and it's nice to see what a bit of hard work and dedication gets you when you look back at five years ago at my first Finke I came 40.

"I am grateful for all the local people who have given me sheds to work from, volunteers at the fuel stops as it's really a team effort."

No big team. No backup plan. Just belief – and the throttle hand to match.

A DESERT BUILT ON STORIES

There's no race like Finke. No room for luck. It's a full-throttle test of courage, preparation and toughness. Every second counts. Every bump can break you. And in 2025, it delivered one of the most memorable years in recent history.

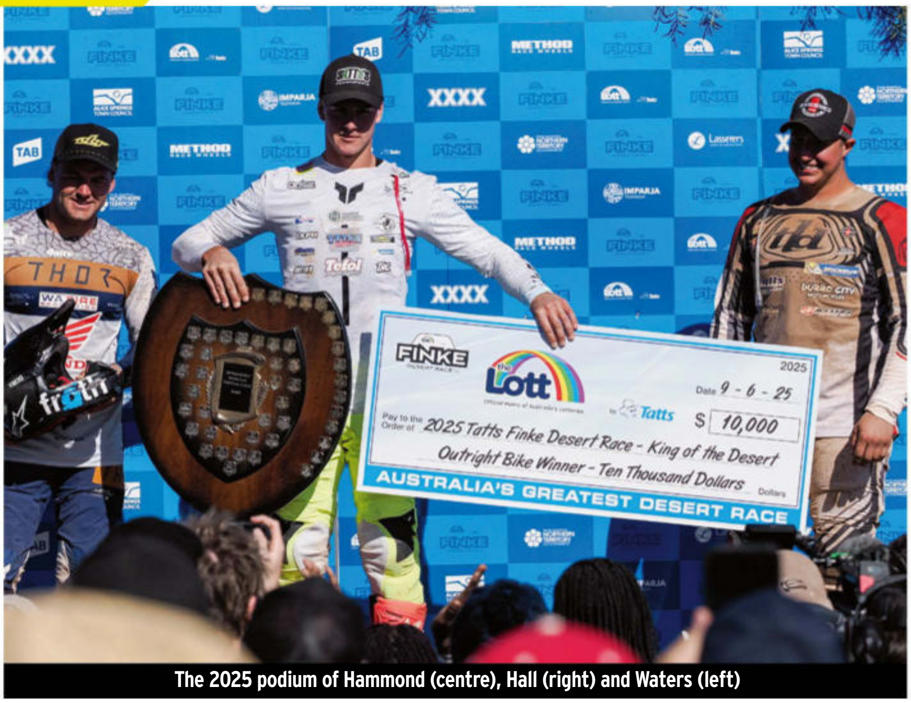
Corey Hammond's underdog win will go down as one of the most dominant ever. A privateer beating the big dogs, riding smart and leaving nothing to chance.

And right behind him, on the same brutal track, a young bloke from country NSW learned what it really means to chase a dream – dust in his teeth, a flat tyre in the sand and a family pushing him every kilometre of the way.

The Finke doesn't care who you are. But if you make it to the end, you've earned your place in its story.

Two riders. Two stories. One desert. And both? Absolutely earned their place in Finke folklore. ADB

Got something to say about this yarn?
Let us know at adbmag@adbmag.com.au


FINKE
Lott
Tatts
Date 9 - 6 - 25
2025
Pay to the Order of 2025 Tatts Finke Desert Race - King of the Desert
Outright Bike Winner - Ten Thousand Dollars
$ 10,000
AUSTRALIA'S GREATEST DESERT RACE

The 2025 podium of Hammond (centre), Hall (right) and Waters (left)

FAREWELL TO A LEGEND

David Walsh will go down as one of the all-time greats of the Finke Desert Race. The Alice Springs rider brought passion, precision and humility to the event year after year, racking up five consecutive wins and setting a benchmark few could match.

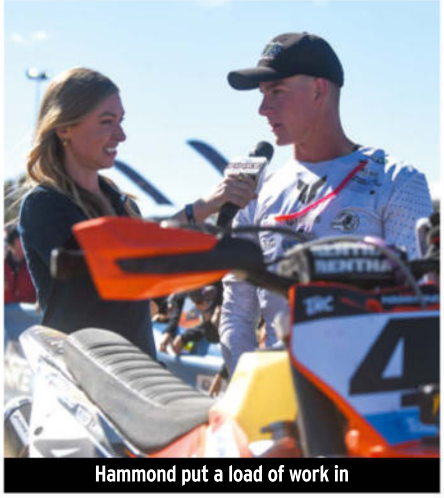
His Finke victories came in:

2019
2021
2022
2023
2024

(Note: The 2020 event was cancelled due to COVID-19.)

Walsh's five-in-a-row ties the record for most consecutive bike wins at Finke, matching Randall Gregory's streak from 1991 to 1995. However, Toby Price still holds the record for the most overall bike victories with six.

His retirement in 2025 closes a historic chapter, but his legacy continues through the next generation, both in the red dirt and the paddock.



Hammond put a load of work in

FINKE
3
2025

Waters finished in third after his big crash

4
Tefol
Winston
ACERBIS
AKPH

Chasing dust, dodging bikes, adrenaline surging. Finke doesn't wait. The whoops are relentless, the terrain ever-changing.

WORDS & PHOTOS // **MAX SULLIVAN**

MUD SLINGERS

THE 2025 KAMFARI REPRESENTED THE EVENT'S 54TH YEAR AND IT WAS A RAGING, MUDDY SUCCESS

KEEPING UP WITH TRADITIONS

When it comes to off-road racing, every few years, something new and exciting pops up on the calendar. While this is fantastic for the sport and means riders now have an opportunity to experience a new format or location, there are a handful of events that just keep going… year after year. New events help grow the sport, but credit needs to be given to the long-held events that continually encourage and attract riders to participate in our great sport.

Without doubt, the Finke Desert Race has been the most well-known off-road race on the calendar for nearly 50 years, but did you know the infamous Kamfari enduro started two years prior back in 1972? That's before *ADB*! Now in its 54th year, the Kamfari is still running strong, just like *ADB*, and attracting competitors from all over Australia. It may not have the numbers of the Finke Desert Race but the challenge just to complete this event would arguably outweigh the challenge to ride there and back. The 2025 results speak for themselves, with just over 60 per cent of the field completing the enduro in the allotted time. If you are looking for a motorcycle (or quad) race to challenge yourself and your machine, then the Kamfari is for you.

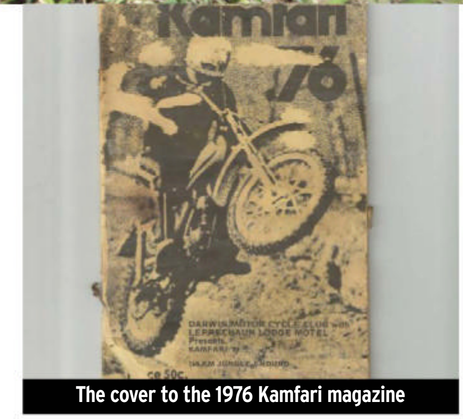
AN INTERESTING START

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the

Now in its 54th year, the Kamfari is still running strong and attracting competitors from all over Australia

Brad 'Wonka' Williscroft racked up 10 wins

The late Jack Veal supplied by Stephen McCann


Kamfari
76
DARWIN MOTOR CYCLE CLUB with
LEPRECHAUN LODGE MOTEL
Presents
50c

The cover to the 1976 Kamfari magazine

trail rides and enduros held around Darwin all headed out in one continuous loop around the swamps and flood plains, which meant spectators and family only had a chance to see the riders at the start and the finish. The Kamfari was to change this by running riders on a shorter loop that came back past the start/finish area, allowing all the other people involved the opportunity to spectate and enjoy the action. The three men credited with the birth of the Kamfari are sadly no longer with us – Peter Thomsen, Don McCann and Jack Veal came up with the idea after a few discussions at the McCann household. The men had also read about the new Baja 1000 race held in Mexico, where riders competed with no assistance, so this also had an influence on the layout of what would become the Kamfari.

The format for the Kamfari would be a 100 mile race through swamps, looping back through the spectator area, with no assistance other than from fellow competitors and no time limit. Peter Thomsen offered up the use of his land at Kamfari Park and the Kamfari was born.

LEGACY OF A LEGEND

By all accounts Peter Thomsen was a bit of character and this spilled over into the Kamfari when it came time to start the race. Rather than just drop a flag to signal the start, Peter chose a different persona every year to entertain and start the race with, a process that became iconic to the race. One year he came wandering out, catfish hanging from his shirt, advising the riders "it's a bit wet out there" before pointing his Tennessee Flintlock Shotgun skyward and pulling the trigger, signalling the start of the race. The shotgun starts and characters portrayed by Peter became synonymous with the race.

Fast forward to 2025 and the legacy continues, thanks to Dennis Saunders who carries on the tradition of the shotgun start, as well as wearing interesting costumes every year. For the past 16 years, Dennis has entertained the crowds and riders by dressing up in everything from a prison warden to a disco king in a gold suit. While the shotgun is no longer a flintlock, the same single barrel firearm is used every year. One year, Dennis had some wildlife handlers carry a small crocodile across the line of riders waiting at the start. Riders were advised the croc was found on the track in the morning, but they don't know where the mother is. That may have been a joke, but this is the Northern Territory, so I am sure there were some interstate riders hoping they didn't fall off in the water!

NATURAL PROGRESSION

Although the core of the Kamfari has remained unchanged for more than 50 years, there will always be a natural progression. Some changes are made

But 2025 turned out to be significantly wetter than previous years and this threw up a huge challenge for all riders

William Thornton looks for assistance

Peter Hardy on his Bridge Auto Suzuki RM250 1976

Peter Thomsen & Wendy Thomsen

Matthew Secrett takes a reprieve from the mud on one of the dry trails

to accommodate technology, some to appease insurance companies, and some to improve the overall event. While today's Kamfari has quite a few changes from the original, all of them are necessary to maintain the race and keep the tradition going. A few of the changes made in the last 50 years are as follows:

- Peter Thomsen's Kamfari Park was the start of the event. It subsequently found several new homes over the years, including Marlow's Lagoon, Gunn Point, Robinson Barracks and it now resides at Cox Peninsula.
- Juniors used to race on a separate track in the early days, however the race is now just for seniors.
- Today's race is timed – four hours to complete as many laps as possible. The original race was 100 miles with no time limit.
- Quad riders were invited to the event in 2001 and mixed it with the bikes.
- In 2004, the Quads were given their own separate track to race.
- Originally, no assistance was allowed, other than from competitors. In 2021 a change was made to allow one pit crew to assist refuelling bike and rider.
- 2024 saw the addition of the Women's class.
- More stringent rules were put in place to keep spectators safe.

NO BULL

Even if you don't follow surfing, the vast majority of people would recognise a surfer holding a wooden trophy containing a bell means that surfer has won Bells Beach. For motorcycle riders, the instant recognition comes when they see a rider lofting a set of buffalo horns overhead; that rider must have won the Kamfari.

There have been a few races throughout the years where riders received some exquisite trophies for winning the Kamfari, but by far the most sought after trophy is the horns. The iconic buffalo horns can also be credited to Peter Thomsen, who back in the 1970s hunted buffalo. He provided a spectacular set of horns for the first Kamfari and this was to be the perpetual trophy that would gather riders names each year as time progressed.

Lyndon Schlein was the first winner back in 1972, so his name was added via a small plaque. However, Lyndon went on to win three in a row! The unwritten rule back in the day was if you win an event three years running, you get to keep the trophy. So that's the story behind the original set of buffalo horns which now reside with Lyndon in Mildura. Throughout his riding career, Lyndon raced several disciplines and won many championships and trophies. Without doubt, the Kamfari buffalo horns are his most memorable and loved of all trophies.

FIRST HAND ACCOUNT – JOHN HICKEY

In 1972, John Hickey decided to enter the Kamfari on his 1968 BSA Victor Special 441cc motorcycle. Hearing about the deep water, John decided to prepare for it, since this bike was not just his race bike, but his daily transport. The BSA didn't have the best air intake for a waterlogged off-road event so John put his skills to the test and fashioned up a snorkel. This consisted of an air filter *borrowed* from the spare parts bin at the drilling site he worked at. It was a bulldozer pilot motor air filter and tube, which was then attached to the rear of the carburettor and fed up past the modified oil tank. The other modification was to remove the lights and mount a paint tin lid to the front of the bike as a number plate.

John describes the race as extremely difficult and each lap was a struggle. “At the end of each lap, I felt like I was nearly dead!” He said. However John managed to finish the race and from his memory, it was in 14th position, which was pretty impressive.

John, rode to the 2025 Kamfari on his original BSA from the first race. After watching the the 2025 race, we asked him how it compares to the Kamfari of 1972?

“You really can’t compare,” John says. “They are all tough. It is very hard to gauge as the bikes they ride today are vastly different from the heavy bikes we rode. Our bikes had less power, less suspension travel and no one was sponsored. We struggled just to buy parts! I have nothing but admiration for the riders I saw today. It has been great to watch and I really love and respect this race.”

THE FLYING FRECKLE

Iconic races like the Kamfari attract all sorts of riders and are often the foundation of some amazing stories. Wayne Tinsley fondly remembers his first Kamfari back in 1998 and was awestruck when he found out motocross legend Jeff Leisk had entered the race. Wayne figured he would only see Leisky on the startline, but 10 minutes into the race, Wayne was struggling in the mud, pushing his bike and he came across the legend Leisk, dewatering his drowned bike. Wayne continued pushing his bike and overtook Leisk. You can imagine how many times that story has been told, especially when Leisk DNF’d and Wayne went on to complete the race! Remember that time I beat The Flying Freckle…

10 FROM 10

Every long-running event has a King (or Queen) who has taken more wins than anyone else. Kamfari, at this stage, has two. Both Tony Morris and Brad ‘Wonka’ Williscroft have 10 wins each to their name. Morris picked up his wins between 1984 and 1998 and at the time it seemed like a record never to be broken.

Chris Warwick lofts the sought after Buffalo horns

Daniel McInnes is the 2025 Winner

Stephen McCann and father Don McCann back at the first race in 1972

But in 2004 Williscroft made the trip to Darwin and won his first Kamfari. It took a few years for Wonka to return, but return he did, taking another nine victories and equalling Morris’s record of 10 outright wins. What sets Wonka apart is the fact he only entered the race 10 times!

TOUGHEST IN YEARS

One thing the Darwin Motorcycle Club does not have control of is the weather. In recent years, the wet season did not provide enough ground water to make the track super muddy. Now not all the track is mud, and it has been like this since the inception of the race. There is always dry hardpack track to give riders a break from the relentless quagmire of the swamps and flood plains, but the last few years has seen more dust than mud.

But 2025 turned out to be significantly wetter than previous years and this threw up a huge challenge for all riders. Even the top riders struggled and rarely made a complete lap with out getting bogged several times.

Billy McCulloch made the long trip from Victoria to Darwin and was determined to add a Kamfari trophy to the cabinet. Blasting away from the dead-engine start, McCulloch built a convincing lead as the riders headed into the first of the spear grass mud

flats. In only his second Kamfari, Tyrone Marcus was on the money, keeping McCulloch in sight and Daniel McInnes behind him, while Chris Warwick showed the skill that has brought him four previous victories. By the fourth mud section, it was all over for McCulloch as the KTM 500 lost power and died, handing the lead to Marcus.

Chris Warwick's hopes of back-to-back wins started to fade on lap two when a badly bogged Sherco ate up valuable time. Meanwhile William Thurlbeck was making moves after a bad start, slowly working his way through the field. Kade Chapman also suffered from the extreme mud, dropping from third down to 11th in just one lap.

By the two-hour mark, Tyrone Marcus continued to lead 2014 victor Daniel McInnes and was looking good for the win. Anthony 'Choco' Charlton had settled into fourth place and was glad his Husaberg had come back to life after refusing to start after a fall in the mud. William Thurlbeck now had a good hold on third place but two hours in the heat and humidity meant it was still anyone's race.

On lap seven, Marcus's hopes of winning were dashed. A broken chain guide led to a derailed drive chain and some hasty repairs. McInnes took the lead and eventually lapped Marcus to complete 10 laps in the allotted four hours, taking a well-deserved win. Fortunately Tyrone managed to repair the bike enough to keep hold of second outright and Thurlbeck came home in third outright.

In the Quad category, Richard Mitchell finally got the win, with Gary Burns securing second outright, and Gabriel Danen finishing third.

FINAL WORD

Daniel Nagle – President of the Darwin Motorcycle Club

"Kamfari is part of our history and for some it's the only event they ride all season, year after year," explains Daniel Nagle. "If we set a good track, we get a tick of approval. But if we set a real Kamfari track – we make history. I'm honoured to be part of the team that allowed our riders to test their limits, pushing mentally and physically in an attempt to be a finisher. Not everyone made it, but the crowd cheered loud and hard for everyone who tried.

"Kamfari provides an epic challenge, bringing together our community and celebrating the bravery and heart of our riders. It's why after 54 years, Kamfari continues to live on." ADB

Got something to say about this yarn?
Let us know at adbmag@adbmag.com.au

Some impressive trophies have been presented

The unwritten rule back in the day was if you win an event three years running, you get to keep the trophy

THANKS

Thanks to the following people for their input in researching this article:

- Peter Thomsen (Jnr)
- Brett Thomsen
- Stephen McCann
- Lyndon & Lynette Schlein
- Clint Holmes

WORDS AND PHOTOS // **WARREN JACK**

australasian DIRT BIKE

50TH ANNIVERSARY

50 years of gold

TO CELEBRATE *ADB'S* 50 YEAR MILESTONE, WAZZA GOES BACK THROUGH THE ARCHIVES AND PICKS OUT SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS

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Rally King!
EXCLUSIVE: DANIEL SANDERS TELL-ALL INTERVIEW!

Well here we are after 50 years from when Geoff Eldridge and Ray Ryan sat down together with a flagon of red wine in Ray's Revesby backyard bemoaning the poor coverage of dirtbikes in the then current crop of Australian motorcycle magazines. This was despite GE freelancing for *REVS* and Ray for *Two Wheels* and *REVS* as their dirtbike correspondents. Not only did they agree that something needed to be done to fix the problem but they decided they were the ones to fix it. So were the birth pangs of *ADB* to begin.

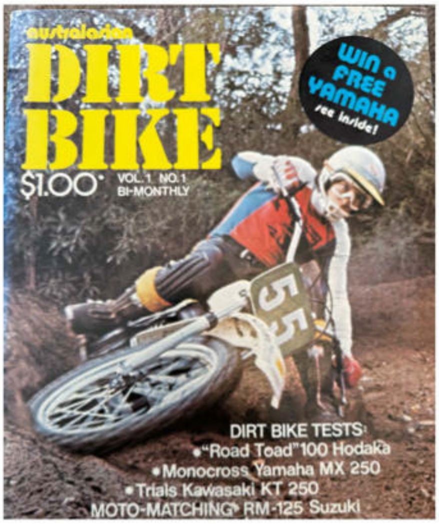
Ray approached a mate of his, Wayne Cantell who published 4WD magazine *Off Road Australia*, and sold him on the idea. The workload was divided up and both Geoff and Ray worked individually, delivering their results to Wayne. The first issue of *Australasian Dirt Bike* lobbed onto the newsagents shelves shortly after the 1975 Mr Motocross final, having been funded by selling a one-off newspaper *Competition Dirt Rider* by hand around the Mr Motocross crowd at Amaroo Park. It had been seat of the pants chaos to get it up and running but the result appealed to readers and a legend had begun.

The first issue cost one dollar, compared to the 60 cents to buy *Trail and Track*, but the paper was better quality, there were some colour pages and there was a healthy dose of fun, irreverence and a disdain for bullshit and bureaucracy scattered through the pages. It was full of good advice, honest opinions and healthy larrikinism. Although it sold, Cantell did not have the funds to pay either of them a salary and the appearance of *ADB* effectively finished Ray's links with other publications so with bills to pay, he walked away halfway through preparing issue number two. No money changed hands; he just gave his share to GE with a handshake and a "good luck mate" and went searching for a more reliable income.

Geoff Eldridge was working as an architect so had an income stream and was the more focused of the pair so he took on more than he could chew and chewed like buggery and, as a result, *ADB* is still here today. Geoff eventually became sole owner of *ADB* after selling his house to fund the purchase from the publisher, took *ADB* to the top of the sales charts and was tragically killed in a racing accident in the Acerbis Rally in Nevada in August 1993. Ray moved to Western Australia, still contributed to *ADB*, eventually founded *VMX* magazine but died in August 2004 from cancer.

Geoff left behind an indelible imprint, not only with *ADB* but also his impact on the sport. He helped found the Thumper Nats series, helped publicise the A4DE, Weipa Croc Run, Kamfari and Finke Desert Race amongst others, he actively campaigned for an Aussie team in the ISDE and was an early team manager/rider in 1980. He took to the trenches in his battles with the ACU who in return cancelled his competition licence, and he was behind the push for having the ISDE come to Australia. I reckon he'd be proud of *ADB* having made 50 years and 550 issues, and would be putting his feet up on the desk, grinning a bit and toasting with a beer and cabanossi straight from his office fridge if he was still around.

AUSTRALASIAN DIRT BIKE THROUGH THE AGES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THE 70S

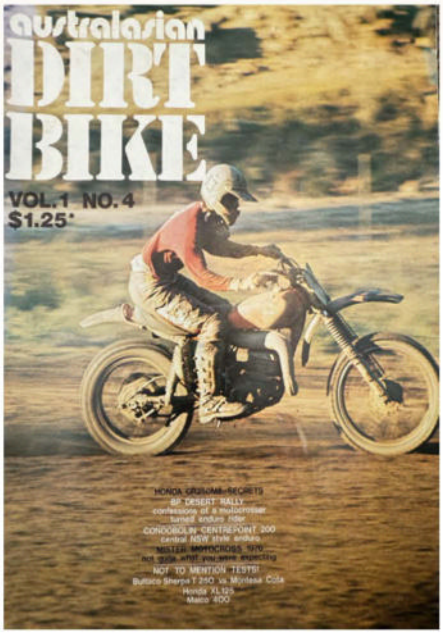
1975

ISSUE ONE hit the public in 1975 with the now well-known photo of Stephen Gall on his private practice track, shot by Ray Ryan. GE's editorial column called 'Reflections' was a sci-fi fantasy of what he thought dirtbike racing may be like in a future overruled by bureaucrats. He was right about the rules and regulations bit – we have that now – but he was out with his timeframe as he set it in 1985.

Tested were a Hodaka Road Toad 100, Yamaha MX250, Kawasaki KT250 trials bike and a shootout between the Yamaha YZ125C and Suzuki RM125. There were reports on the Mr Motocross and Mallee Desert Rally, as well as the Forest 300 and Orange enduros, a comparison of riding shirts, porting secrets for the Elsinore 125, an introduction to the Hungry Creek ride park and a story about the homebuilt Speedwell mono-shock pushbike. Readers could also participate in a five question multiple choice quiz to win a YZ80B.

1976

ISSUE NUMBER two came out with the claim on the cover of a 'Special non-political issue'. We had to wait until July for issue three which introduced stories on training and nutrition, the Motocross Crusader cartoon strip and a look at the Suzuki 446 cab-over mini-truck as a bike transporter, and a change of publisher. Number four announced the winner of the YZ80B, Stuart McCann from South Australia, featured Menai in western Sydney as a riding area and gave instructions on how to set up a CR250 Elsinore including frame alterations to increase travel. Christmas was approaching by issue five so it included some novelty Christmas cards to cut out, an interview with Winston Stokes, a 24 page Matich catalogue as advertisers were increasing substantially by then, and *ADB*'s first ag bike test between Honda and Yamaha.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Bultaco Sherpa T 250 vs Montesa Cota
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Maico 400

1977

TO KICK off a new year in issue six we had a three way minibike shootout between the Honda, Yamaha and Suzuki 80s, comparisons of the Yamaha TT500D and XT500C as well as the DT250D and DT400D, and the Husqvarna 360 Automatic. There were reports on the Perenjori desert race from WA, the Australian Trials Titles, the 2NX Pony Express and a story on the experiences of Australia's two Six Day representatives Ted Goddard and Col Tregonning. For the seventh issue we interviewed Anthony Gunter, tested the Zundapp GS125, Honda TL250, Yamaha TT500D, RM370B, pitted the Honda XL175 against the Suzuki TS185 and Yamaha DT175D and to top it off we put the Maico 250 and Suzuki PE250 head to head.

Number eight had *ADB's* first adventure story when Peter Cooper told how he rode a Yamaha XT500 17,000km around Australia. We tested the Montesa 250 Enduro, reported on the Mr Motocross Series, BP Desert Rally and the inaugural NSW Bicycle Motocross. To settle the horse versus horsepower debate for the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper, Geoff Eldridge and cross country horseman Tex Nowlan were timed separately over an enduro loop at Madonna Park which GE won comfortably on a TS185 Suzuki. This issue was also when the first contribution from me, Waren Jack, appeared.

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KX250-A4
FEATURE:
FUTURE
OF DIRT RIDING
#11
1978

1978

ADB WAS becoming more regular and was putting the months on the cover and Yaffa was now the publisher. In the March/April offering Alan Cunynghame reported back from the 1977 ISDT and we covered the Australian MX Titles in SA where Anthony Gunter took home the 250 and Unlimited crowns. We dipped our lids to riders who did it tough such as Gary De Wildt who had a mechanical right arm, one eyed Syd Moore, Phil Eldridge who was missing his right leg below the knee and Peter Gammage who had his right hand where his elbow should have been.

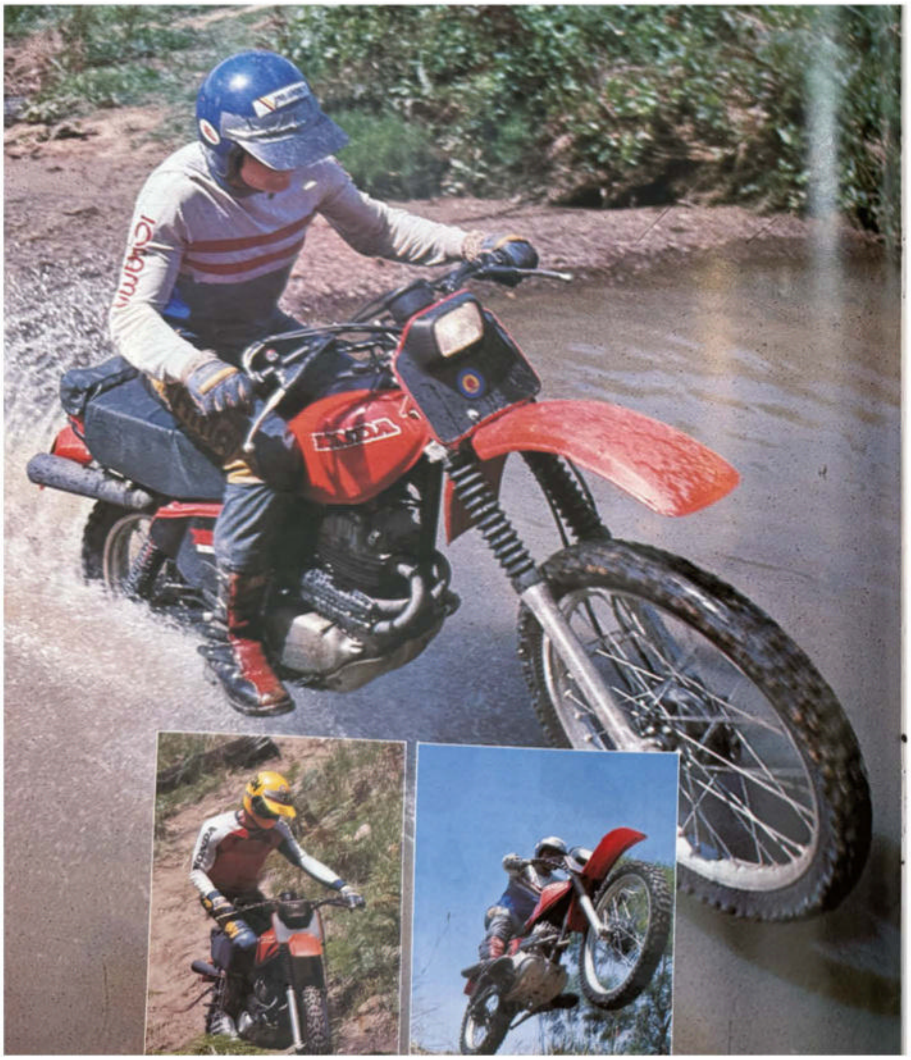
For May/June the main feature story was on the future of dirtbike riding and this was highlighted by the futuristic artwork of Peter Ledger on the cover. Bare breasts on the cover; the censors must have been at smoko when it slipped through. The July/August offerings were on enduro prepping your bike, while September/October highlighted the Cessnock Interstate Challenge, the brainchild of John Hall which became the A4DE. November/December finished the year with reports on Mr Motocross, the Bathurst Orange 2x2 enduro series, the Hang Ten Cup and Victoria's Grand National motocross.

1979

THE YEAR started with a report from the 1978 ISDT, the Wood Duck Challenge, a dirtbikes versus roadbikes road race at Oran Park, and a wrap up of the Rakman Enduro Series, regarded by all except the ACU as a National Series. We tested some Hondas, a Bultaco and a Hercules, interviewed Stephen Gall, and covered the NSW Short Circuit Titles, Hunter 500 Two Day and the Australian MX Titles where Mike Landman took the 125, Pelle Granquist the 250 and 500 and Graeme Smythe the Unlimited wins. There was a feature on dirtbike photography and a report on the 2SM/Coca Cola Motocross Enduro Confrontation.

The Queensland Enduro Series was covered, Caterisms made its first appearance and the Suzuki Wetbike was tested. There was also a report on how the ACU stepped in to stop the Hungry Creek 200 as it was a non-ACU event and GE was scathing in his criticism. This was probably the first shot fired in Geoff's long campaign to modernise the ACU.

We covered the Cessnock Four Day, BP Desert Rally, and Australian Mini Bike Championships and interviewed Mark Pace. Ray Ryan went to the USA and came back with the inside gossip on Moto-X Fox. We finished the year with interviews of Mike Landman and Mark Hill in the November/December issue, tech stories on building a chain oiler, monoshock modifications, and a recreational vehicle code of ethics.



THE 80S

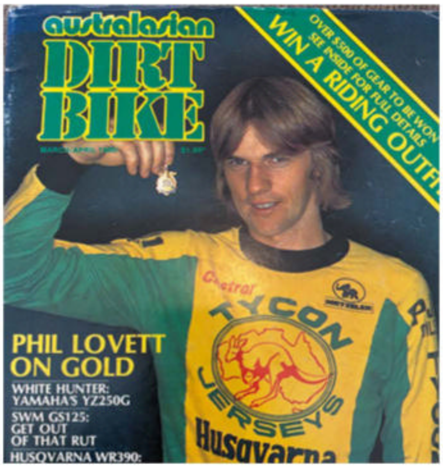
1980

WE STARTED the New Year with coverage of the 1979 Australian Motocross Titles where we spotted a fast kid called Jeff Leisk for the first time, the 1979 ISDT, Australian Short Circuit titles and the 1979 Mr Motocross, won by the late Anthony Gunter. GE got political again with his report on an enquiry into recreational vehicle usage and how the ACU only sent one representative to represent the sport. The ACU took umbrage at a certain "heads up bums" cartoon from a reader. *ADB* reported on the first mechanical start gates we ever saw, an innovation of the Goondiwindi MCC.

Phil Lovett got a cover holding his gold medal from the ISDT, we reported on the Superbowl of Motocross from Brisbane and the Mountain Man from Toowoomba and tested the YZ250G, SWM GS125, Husqvarna 390WR and IT425G.

We asked why 125s weren't more prominent in Aussie racing, interviewed tuning gurus Frank Pons and Gary Treadwell, and Murray Watt gave instruction on how to be a good dirtbike slob.

In July/August we visited the Bell helmet factory, looked at how Gall, Gunter and Leisk were doing in the USA and showed how to set up for one minute tyre changes. For September/October we had a 175 enduro shootout and compared Scott and Vendramini plastic boots.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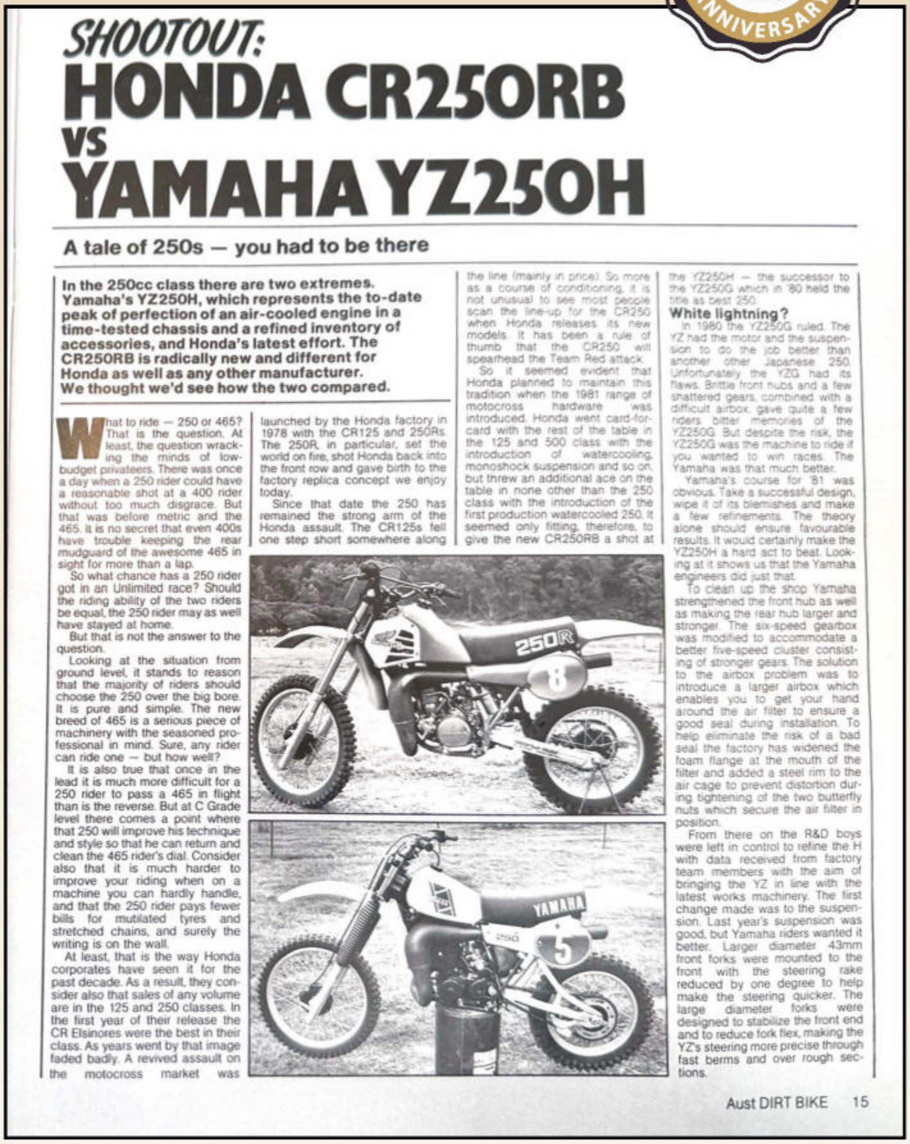


SHOOTOUT:

HONDA CR250RB VS YAMAHA YZ250H

A tale of 250s — you had to be there

In the 250cc class there are two extremes. Yamaha's YZ250H, which represents the to-date peak of perfection of an air-cooled engine in a time-tested chassis and a refined inventory of accessories, and Honda's latest effort. The CR250RB is radically new and different for Honda as well as any other manufacturer. We thought we'd see how the two compared.

What to ride — 250 or 465? That is the question. At least, the question wracking the minds of low-budget privateers. There was once a day when a 250 rider could have a reasonable shot at a 400 rider without too much disgrace. But that was before metric and the 465. It is no secret that even 400s have trouble keeping the rear mudguard of the awesome 465 in sight for more than a lap.

So what chance has a 250 rider got in an Unlimited race? Should the riding ability of the two riders be equal, the 250 rider may as well have stayed at home.

But that is not the answer to the question.

Looking at the situation from ground level, it stands to reason that the majority of riders should choose the 250 over the big bore. It is pure and simple. The new breed of 465 is a serious piece of machinery with the seasoned professional in mind. Sure, any rider can ride one — but how well?

It is also true that once in the lead it is much more difficult for a 250 rider to pass a 465 in flight than is the reverse. But at C Grade level there comes a point where that 250 will improve his technique and style so that he can return and clean the 465 rider's dial. Consider also that it is much harder to improve your riding when on a machine you can hardly handle, and that the 250 rider pays fewer bills for mutilated tyres and stretched chains, and surely the writing is on the wall.

At least, that is the way Honda corporates have seen it for the past decade. As a result, they consider also that sales of any volume are in the 125 and 250 classes. In the first year of their release the CR Elsinores were the best in their class. As years went by that image faded badly. A revived assault on the motocross market was launched by the Honda factory in 1978 with the CR125 and 250Rs. The 250R, in particular, set the world on fire, shot Honda back into the front row and gave birth to the factory replica concept we enjoy today.

Since that date the 250 has remained the strong arm of the Honda assault. The CR125s fell one step short somewhere along the line (mainly in price). So more as a course of conditioning, it is not unusual to see most people scan the line-up for the CR250 when Honda releases its new models. It has been a rule of thumb that the CR250 will spearhead the Team Red attack.

So it seemed evident that Honda planned to maintain this tradition when the 1981 range of motocross hardware was introduced. Honda went card-for-card with the rest of the table in the 125 and 500 class with the introduction of watercooling, monoshock suspension and so on, but threw an additional ace on the table in none other than the 250 class with the introduction of the first production watercooled 250. It seemed only fitting, therefore, to give the new CR250RB a shot at the YZ250H — the successor to the YZ250G which in '80 held the title as best 250.

White lightning?

In 1980 the YZ250G ruled. The YZ had the motor and the suspension to do the job better than another other Japanese 250. Unfortunately the YZG had its flaws. Brittle front hubs and a few shattered gears, combined with a difficult airbox, gave quite a few riders bitter memories of the YZ250G. But despite the risk, the YZ250G was the machine to ride if you wanted to win races. The Yamaha was that much better.

Yamaha's course for '81 was obvious. Take a successful design, wipe it of its blemishes and make a few refinements. The theory alone should ensure favourable results. It would certainly make the YZ250H a hard act to beat. Looking at it shows us that the Yamaha engineers did just that.

To clean up the shop Yamaha strengthened the front hub as well as making the rear hub larger and stronger. The six-speed gearbox was modified to accommodate a better five-speed cluster consisting of stronger gears. The solution to the airbox problem was to introduce a larger airbox which enables you to get your hand around the air filter to ensure a good seal during installation. To help eliminate the risk of a bad seal the factory has widened the foam flange at the mouth of the filter and added a steel rim to the air cage to prevent distortion during tightening of the two butterfly nuts which secure the air filter in position.

From there on the R&D boys were left in control to refine the H with data received from factory team members with the aim of bringing the YZ in line with the latest works machinery. The first change made was to the suspension. Last year's suspension was good, but Yamaha riders wanted it better. Larger diameter 43mm front forks were mounted to the front with the steering rake reduced by one degree to help make the steering quicker. The large diameter forks were designed to stabilize the front end and to reduce fork flex, making the YZ's steering more precise through fast berms and over rough sections.

Aust DIRT BIKE 15

1981

FOR THIS year we told all about the antics of the Aussies at the 1980 ISDT in France, and gave the good oil on the Quicksilver BMX Nationals, the Australian Motocross Championships and the Noel Stephens Two Day at Weipa. We covered the Victorian Mini Bike Championships, the very wet Brisbane Supercross and first put forward the idea of Australia hosting the ISDT.

We looked at the emergence of water cooling, visited the Maico factory and explained how to apply for an ACCA grant to ride overseas.

We went all out pitting the Honda CR250RB against Yamaha's YZ250H, and Suzuki's PE400X up against the IT465H as well as looking at both the DR400 and 500. In September/October we tested the RM250X Full Floater, KTM125RV enduro had a three way four-stroke trailbike shootout between the KL, XT and XL 250s. To top things off we looked at the works bikes of Gall and Gunter and gave a wrap up of the Four Day held at Broken Hill.

To finish the year we had all the news on the Finke Desert Race, won by Phil Lovett, looked at the future of Observed Trials and gave a rundown on Pelle Granquist's efforts in the World 500 Motocross Championship.

1982

IN JANUARY *ADB* went monthly and Murray Watt, aka Honest Muz came on board full-time. We had a feature story on lady racers and a trip report on riding to Cape York after the Weipa Two Day. For February we had the news from the Italian ISDE and spoke with Ele Knowles (aka Maico Mama), Vaughn Style and Chris Cater.

March featured the RM250Z, KE175, Maico 490 Alpha 1, and put the Montesa Cota 349 against the Italjet 350T in a two-way trials test. There was a visit to the Acerbis factory, and GE rode in the Papua New Guinea Motocross and Short Circuit Championships winning the 125 motocross crown and the Division 1 all-in event.

In April we interviewed John Hall, the father of the Four Day, and in May we told you how to modify your four-stroke but asked ‘why bother?’. We also spoke with Neil Grindal, the Competition Secretary of the ACU. June covered the Paris Dakar Rally, North Queensland Pony Express, and asked Ross King about being the Maico importer. We had an article on fitness training in July, and told of riding the Alice Springs 12 Hour Motocross at Mt Ebenezer. August covered the Four Day at Maffra and looked at goggle solutions for wearers of glasses.

September had the Australian Mini Bike Titles and a report on ISDE tyre and suspension rule changes. October told how Phil Lovett won the Finke again and we asked if Craig Dack was NSW’s next motocross star. November had us covering the NZ Junior Motocross Championships.

The year finished with a competition to win a YZ80K, and a behind the scenes report on Australian Supercross with promoter Phil Harrison.

1983

WE WENT to the Husqvarna factory, talked to the Police Trail Bike Squad and rode the Czech ISDE and Weipa Croc Run. GE got political again with a story on what the ACU termed “black events”, Phil Lovett told about riding the Baja 1000 and Steve Chapman reported on the Scottish Six Day Trial. GE lost his ACU licence for riding the “black” Noel Stephens Memorial enduro at Weipa. He circumvented the problem by joining a NZ club and riding on a NZ competition licence.

We showed how to super-tune a minibike, had some fun on a Kawasaki jet ski and covered the Paris Dakar. We rode the Radio Alice 12 Hour won by Phil Lovett and had a wander through the factory of Aussie helmet brand Eldorado. We investigated how WA ran a one-day rego system for non-ADR bikes in enduros and interviewed Bert Flood and Jimmy Ellis, had a look at Stephen Gall’s Finke winning YZ40K, the enduro scene in NZ, and Team *ADB* won the Air Niugini Six Hour Motocross.

The business of being Stephen Gall was a big feature story, we looked at 80cc enduro bikes and the mounts of the Mr Motocross stars, and in a moment of brilliance ran GE’s 7.2 litre T-Bird, (57.6mph, 23.165 secs), a KX500 (97.18mph, 13.429 secs) and a KDX200 (73mph, 16.5 secs) in a ‘Grudge’ meeting at Castlereagh drag strip.

Geoff Eldridge took *ADB* off Yaffa’s hands with his company dirtbike Publishing in July.

1984

WE GOT bogged in the mud in the Welsh ISDE, looked at how the XR350, KTM490MC, IT250K and DR250Z all fared after a year of use and asked how our home grown motocross riders would fare on the world stage. Courting controversy once again GE looked at the point of view of the ACCA/ACU regarding black events. Marty Moates, Jim Ellis, Danny La Porte, Paul Hunt and Haken Carlqvist brought some international flair to the 1983 Summer Supercross pulling the biggest crowds ever at Sydney Showground. We changed our minds about four-strokes after riding the XR250R-E and started campaigning for an Aussie ISDE for the 1988 bi-centennial.

We asked why the Forestry Commission was locking riders out, accusing us of damage, in areas that were going to be logged anyway and gave some tuning tips for the RM, YZ and KX 80s. The Tycon Grand National Hill Climb at Cessnock attracted 500 entries and we discussed some of the ACU competition rules that could penalise a rider and declared the Queensland A4DE the best ever. We also instructed readers on the dos and don’ts of dealing with a seriously injured rider, spoke with ex-pat Yank Marty Moates, and Phil Lovett brought us up to date with his European campaign.

We looked at Jeff Leisk’s career and where he was headed, had a look at the Nepean Six Hour Short Circuit and compared Suzuki’s TS250 against the DR250.

australasian
DIRT BIKE
Oct/Nov 85
#77
BIG COLOUR POSTER INSIDE
YAMAHA TT250
HONDA XR600
AT LAST! A BIG FOUR-STROKE THAT REALLY WORKS!
SA: NEWS 24 HOUR TRIAL
RULES OF THE ROOST PART 8: JUMPING

1985

WE HAD all the news from Australia's first team to compete in the Trophee Des Nations, made up of Stephen Gall, Vaughn Style, Pelle Granquist, Trevor Williams, David Armstrong and Len Williamson. Murray Watt rode unofficially in the Roof Of Africa Rally finishing fourth. Gally's Rules of the Roost column made its first appearance, our Vase team recorded its best finish to date with fourth place in the Dutch ISDE.

We put the 600 trail mounts from Suzuki, Kawasaki and Yamaha against each other, and put all four of the Japanese 80s out to bang 'bars as well as their big brother 250s, and after witnessing the 1984 Australian Junior Gymkhana Championships offered the opinion that it mightn't be a bad idea for seniors as well. The second annual Blue Light Rally drew over 500 riders and we had our first look at the riding splendour in the south island of New Zealand. *Australian Mini Rider* (a magazine within a magazine) under the guidance of Andrew Clubb debuted.

Husqvarna went to a single shock on the XC250 and we asked if it was worth the wait. The Trial and Enduro President of the FIM, Peter Schroeder came to witness the running of the A4DE in response to Australia's request to host the 1988 ISDE and was favourably impressed. The 10th anniversary Finke Desert Race went to Phil Lovett, we were pleasantly surprised by the XR600R Honda and we rounded the year off with the first sight of Phil Lovett's Checkpointers column.

ROOST OUT!
KX80 vs YZ80
BUYER'S PARADISE
australasian
DIRT BIKE
HUSKY 510
POWER CRAZY FOUR-STROKE!
Registered by Australia Post, Publication No. NBP8336
DECEMBER 1986, ISSUE 88 $3.50 ($3.75NZ)*
MX des Nations
AUSSIES FLY HIGH!
Italian ISDE '86
PIZZA, PASTA, SHOULDA GONE FASTA!
ALSO INSIDE!
MINIRIDER
BMW DAKAR
ADB's EXPERTS
PHIL LOVETT

1986

STEVE CHAPMAN won the first Wynns Safari, and Weipa's Croc Run bowed out – temporarily – as the Cape York MCC said the event had outgrown its resources. GE broke his leg there, making it doubly memorable. We called the XR350R a potential giant killer and previewed the YZ125S with its new Monocross rear end.

Australia sent Leisk, Bell and Williams to the Motocross des Nations and looked strong until Leisk crashed in practice, sustaining a crushed vertebra. The Honda XLV750R failed to impress at first, though our opinion softened over time. The Blue Light Rally drew 850 riders, and Queensland's RTCB trail rides were pulling 500.

Murray Watt returned to the Roof of Africa and won again, while Gall, Dack and Bell filled the Syn-Lube Summercross podium. Eldridge tackled the Lake Lefroy Desert Race but didn't finish – only seven riders did. Wayne Adamson won the TT250 competition, we interviewed the NSW Police Trailbike Squad, and were blown away by the electric-start XL600. GE was disqualified from the Incas Rally in Peru, but followed up with third in the four-stroke class at the Mt Isa to Camooweal Desert Race.

We examined how a supercross track was built in the Sydney Entertainment Centre (won by Glen Bell), and Steve Gall took Finke honours from Lovett. Yamaha sponsorship brought the Croc Run back, the mag hit 96 pages and the cover price rose to $3.50. Alan Cunynghame won the Wynns Safari, and Australia's ISDE team finished 17th (Trophy) and 11th (Junior) in Italy. Our MXdN team placed seventh, and GE realised a long-held goal of shifting printing from Hong Kong to Australia.

1987

THE YEAR kicked off with a test of the Cagiva WMX500 and Frank Pons decoding the dark art of suspension tuning. We hit the Blackwater 100 in the USA, covered Syn-Lube Summercross and Lismore Supercross, and previewed who was riding what in motocross and enduro. We caught up with Jeff Leisk racing a Yamaha in the US, surveyed nylon riding pants, and showed how to upsize a plastic fuel tank. We updated you on the increasing debacle around the ACCA's organising of the proposed 1988 ISDE which they insisted be held in Adelaide despite two excellent tenders from Victoria and Queensland.

The ACCA's push to host the 1988 ISDE in Adelaide—despite strong bids from Victoria and Queensland—continued to unravel. We returned to the Lake Lefroy Desert Race, compared cast vs forged pistons, interviewed Dave Armstrong, launched Brooke Flanagan's 'Route Card' column, and ran the infamous 'Dacka's Hat' competition for the ladies.

Our coverage included Castrol Mr Motocross, Kamfari, Dawn to Dusk 12-Hour, and the A4DE. GE penned a cheeky enduro vs motocross rider comparison, and Finke was claimed by Armstrong, Dack and Gall. Eldridge was seventh outright and third 250 at Isa to Camooweal, while Dack, Bell and Armstrong shared Manjimup podium honours. We also featured road-legalised 250 motocrossers crossing the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Later in the year, we reported on the Junior MX Champs in Alice Springs and the Mr Motocross front-runners. Dack won Mr Motocross, Steve Chapman won the Wynns Safari, and we wrapped the Croc Run and NSW Yamaha Enduro Series. A poster of Geoff Ballard at the Polish ISDE rounded out the year, where Australia's Trophy Team finished eighth. Our MXdN squad placed 16th in the USA, Dack beat Leisk for Mountain Man, and in response to *ADB* criticism, the ACU revoked Geoff Eldridge's FIM licence.

australasian
DIRT BIKE
FEBRUARY 1987, ISSUE 90 $3.50 ($3.75NZ)*
plus LIFTOUT ACTION POSTER INSIDE!
HONDA'S KILLER '87
CR250R!
FIRST AUSTRALIAN TEST!
KAWASAKI KLR650!
DEFINITELY BIGGER. DEFINITELY BETTER!
80 KTM ENDURO
GET THAT LEFT FOOT A'TAPPIN'
THE PARIS-DAKAR PHENOMENON
BIG TANKS FOR BIG DREAMERS
Kawasaki
650
KLR

WYNN'S SAFARI
TOUGH ENOUGH?
YAMAHA'S DT200R UNDER FIRE
MISTER MOTOCROSS

1988

WE STRADDLED the New Year with the 100th issue marking it as December/January. GE went to the New Caledonia Rally and almost won it (the French not caring about the ACU licence ruling) running second to Thierry Magnialde. The Honda and Kawasaki 125s were pitched against each other and the DR-Big from Suzuki was previewed. Geoff Ballard joined the *ADB* team as GE had moved to Cairns, running the Sydney *ADB* office-by-the-sea from there, we had high hopes for the upcoming International Four Day, and we tested the KTM 600 and Honda NX650 as well as the RM250J and DT175.

Australia won the International class of the I4DE, which was proof we could have run the ISDE just as well if not for interference from the ACCA, and we interviewed the new President of the ACU, Ian Palmer. We offered advice on how to ride mud, a pull-out poster of Jeff Leisk and a report on the first Annual Vintage motocross at Amaroo Park. The September issue showed the winners of the "Send in a photo of a girl" contest which grew into the Cutie pies and Sinisalo Girl pages.

October offered spy photos of the next year's CR, YZ, KX, RM and KDX models, asked why Japanese Wynn's competitor Hideaki Suzuki rode a Yamaha, and got the first test ride on the 1989 YZ125W and YZ250W. In November we told all about the Wynn's Safari and talked to winner Michael Goddard. In December we had reports on the ISDE, Australia's fourth place in the MX des Nations and Jeff Leisk winning all three Australian Motocross Titles in one day at Mackay. The contents page listed a "special naked wimmin sealed section" on page 85, but there were only 84 pages.

1989

WE TESTED the best-selling XR250 and spotlighted the country's most expensive dirtbike – Paul Wright's Safari-prepped DR-Big, which DNF'd. Leisk and Dack's appearance at the Paris Supercross featured, alongside a test of the XRs Only XR280 and Yamaha's road-legal YZ250WR. Geoff Ballard rode sweep in the Barstow to Vegas, we checked out factory Paris-Dakar bikes, previewed the XTZ750 Super Ténéré, and covered Japan's Hidaka Two-Day enduro.

We profiled Glen Bell, caught up with Leisk and Dack's Euro campaigns, and spoke with Leisk's mechanic Peter 'Buddha' Luczowski. GE celebrated his first Aussie Title – winning the Over 35s class at the Kalgoorlie A4DE. We gave away a DR200 to a lucky subscriber and crowned the Ballards-prepped XR630 "King Kong of thumpers." Kim Ashkenazi was emerging as one to watch, while Ballard and Brooke Flanagan went to NZ for the Shell Challenge 100 Enduro, finishing fourth and fifth respectively. We reported on the Japan-only CRM250 and followed Bell's run in the Winston Smokin' Wheels event in Guam.

In September, Steve Chapman recounted his Incas Rally ride in Peru. October saw GE cross the Simpson Desert from Alice to Birdsville, and we showed how to prep Safari bikes and fabricate a bashplate. November featured the first test of the YZ125A and event wrap-ups for the MXdN, ISDE and Safari. December brought staff changes – GE returned as editor, Andrew Clubb left to manage the Marlboro Yamaha Dealer Team, Simon Pavey rode the CRM250 in Japan, and we launched our inaugural Dirt Bike of the Year award, won by Honda's XR250RK.

FIRST TIME EVER!
australasian DIRT BIKE
10 BEST DIRT BIKES OF 1989
THE ADB AWARDS
1989 IN REVIEW
THE ULTIMATE KDX!
BTX KDX200
FIRST TEST!
SUZUKI RM125L

125 SHOOTOUT!
CR vs KX vs RM vs YZ
Different results to the Americans?

In recent years, the Americans have unanimously awarded first place in both 125cc and 250cc shootouts to Honda. Best bike bar none, they reckon.
We reckon different.
But the result is still very, very close.

Photographs by Geoff Eldridge

ADB maintains that having the best motor doesn't automatically guarantee the best bike. In Honda's case, their CR125 might make excellent power in terms of the most power but the other three make excellent power, in their own ways.

Plug in a few other variables like forks and shock absorber and the motor can be edged out in the overall results.

Widen the criteria to include riders other than top level pro riders in Los Angeles and the results sheet can come out looking very different indeed.

This is our first four-bike Japanese 125cc shootout since 1985 and in those years the CR125 has polled top votes with the Yank

THE 90S

1990

WE KICKED off 1990 with a long-term KLR650 test, plus coverage of Australia's biggest trailbike rallies – Blue Light and Sunny Corner. GE shared his Barstow to Vegas story, we featured France's Superbikers event, and farewelled ACU President Ian Palmer. Tests included the KTM250MX, RM250L, YZ250A, KTM 540EXC, and XR250R. We also pit the XR280 against the YZ250 in the bush, weighed up drum vs disc brakes, and explored flywheel weights in tech.

Yamaha's XT600 gained electric start, Maico was reborn, and Kawasaki topped our four-way 125cc motocross shootout. At Ulverstone Rodeo, barrel racing saw horses best bikes. We tested the Maico 250 Enduro, RMX250L, and KDX200E2, and welcomed Dacka back from Europe. GE won a Four Day class aboard an RMX, and Wazza wrote of a ride that went all wrong.

We asked who ruled 250 motocross – KX or YZ – with the RM close and CR behind. We debated whether supercross was killing motocross, offered low-impact riding tips, and examined re-treaded tyres. A trail-enduro shootout included four 250s plus the DT200R, and we reviewed the Yamaha TDR250.

Dryvtech's Aussie-built 2WD/2WS, Husky's TE350, and DR250S racing got spotlighted, as did AIS rider development. Tony Kirby toured the Snowys, and we previewed 1991 models from Japan and KTM. Finke first-timers, Mr Motocross, and quad legend Mat Coulter also featured.

John Hederics won the Safari, Ballard DNF'd his 13th ISDE, and we wrapped with the *ADB* Awards – Bike of the Year: DR250S. Leisk retired before Burswood Supercross, and we tested the TS200 and the do-it-all YZ250 motocross machine.

1991

WE STARTED the decade profiling Aussie mechanics working in Europe and questioned whether bikes were actually cheaper in real terms. With no official national series, *ADB* staged its own Aussie Enduro Nats. We noted the rise of Paris-Dakar replica models, launched the Cutie Pies comp, followed Shai Saul's lap of Australia on a KDX200, and covered four-stroke mufflers, legal riding locations and top riders' all-time favourite bikes.

David Armstrong proved motocrossers could handle enduro by winning the A4DE in Bright. Randall Gregory took out Finke, Australia finished 10th at the MXdN, and Glen Bell and Craig Dack claimed 125 and 250 motocross titles respectively at Noble Falls.

We questioned whether ADRs were killing enduros and put a WR200 through the race-rego process to find out – then tried quieting it to meet noise rules. The Safari featured growing Japanese involvement and we took a close look at John Hederics's XR600.

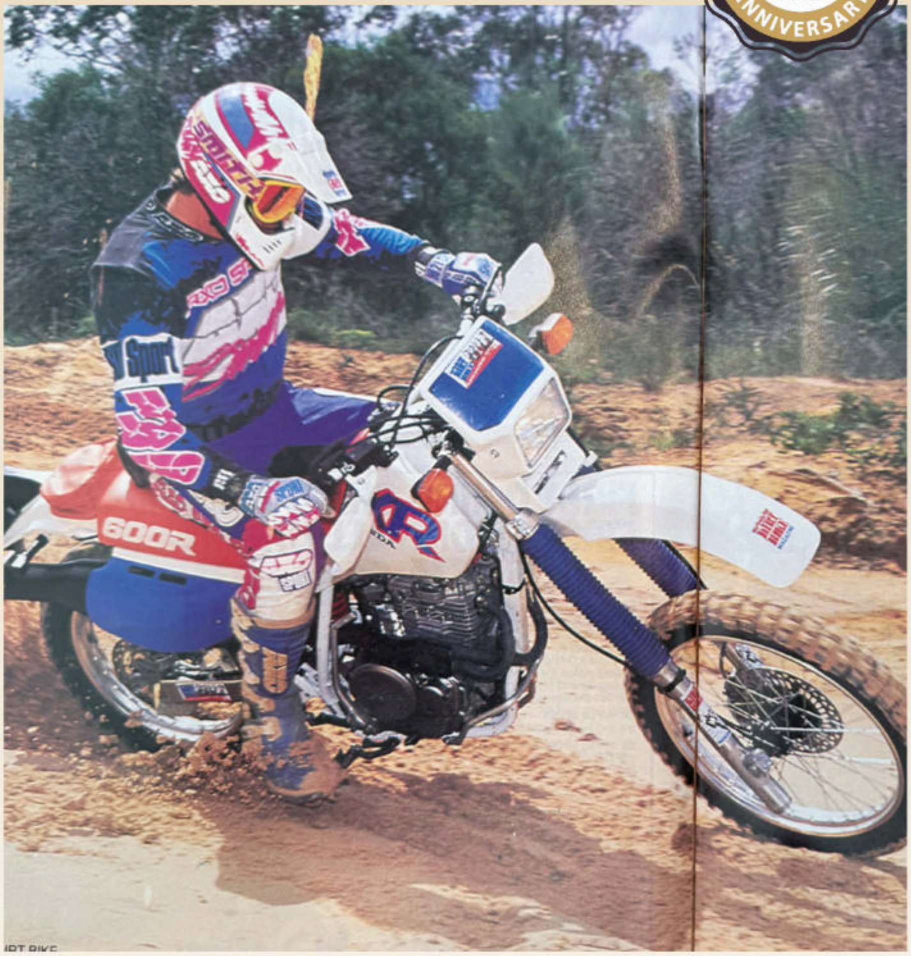
We revisited the world's worst dirtbikes and dodgy accessories, examined the bikes used by outback musterers, and named the WR200 our Dirt Bike of the Year. Tests included the RM250, YZ125, DR350, KDX250, TY250 and Husky 610. The RMX250 faced off against the WR250, while the CR500 battled KTM's big-bore two-stroke.

All four Japanese 125 motocrossers went head-to-head, and we also staged a six-bike 250cc enduro shootout. To cap things off, we previewed the upcoming 1992 WR250 and RM125 – closing out a packed year of tests, opinions and off-road action.

CR500 VS KTM500

WHAT'S RED AND WHITE AND FAST ALL OVER?

BRINGING IN THE BIG GUNS



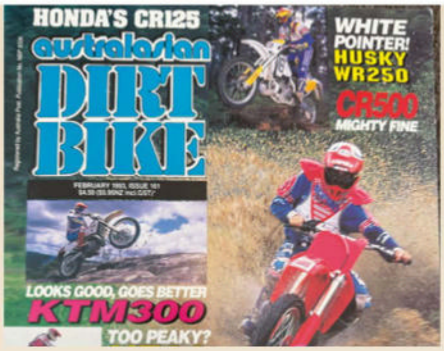
1992

WE KICKED off the year testing the Husqvarna 350TE and KTM250MX, and visited the Army's 1st Transport Squadron to inspect their XT600s. Tony Kirby joined 60 Europeans on the Spirit of Adventure ride from Sydney to Ayers Rock. A special XR600 feature offered history, setup tips and a new model test. We published a full-year comp calendar and a tech special covering everything from fitting grips to sharpening 'peg teeth.

We toured Yamaha's R&D department, tested 80cc motocrossers, pitted Euro and Japanese 250 enduros head-to-head, and compared the Husky TE350 with Suzuki's non-ADR DR350. A road trip with Lyndon Heffernan and Stan Burgin showed the realities of a racer's life, and we joined the Oyster Bay Poker Run and Eildon Nav Rally.

Frank Bonfadini won the A4DE, we explored the European motocross pit scene, and proved it was possible to ride all the way from Melbourne to Sydney off-road. Mid-year saw a four-way trials shootout (Beta, Fantic, GASGAS, Yamaha), and we previewed 1993's Suzuki and Yamaha motocrossers. In September, we revealed new Hondas and Huskies and ran a vintage big-bore shootout with classics from CZ, Husky, Maico, Suzuki and Yamaha.

October delivered the landmark Aussie ISDE at Cessnock, where we impressed as hosts. Our MXdN team climbed to sixth and John Hederics scored a Safari hat-trick. November brought the KLX650 and a Shane Watts interview. We ended 1992 with the Yamaha Serow named Bike of the Year and a trailbike group test featuring the DT200, KDXs, XR280, XR600 and TT600.


HONDA'S CR125
australasian
DIRT BIKE
FEBRUARY 1993, ISSUE 161
WHITE POINTER! HUSKY WR250
CR500 MIGHTY FINE
LOOKS GOOD, GOES BETTER
KTM300
TOO PEAKY?

1993

THE YEAR kicked off with a 250 motocross shootout featuring the four Japanese brands plus a Husky, alongside dyno tests of Suzuki's DR350 and DR430. We broke news of Kawasaki's KLX250R, scared ourselves on the CR500, questioned the YZ80's power delivery, and compared the XR, KLR and DR250s. A visit to the KTM factory followed, while looming GST led us to explore how it might impact riders. Brake fluid boiling points were tested, and five 125 motocrossers went under the microscope.

We asked if the KLX650R could dethrone the XR600, later testing it against Honda and Husky's 610. Yamaha's TY250-Z stunned us, Glen Bell shared his rivalry with Dack, and a tech feature showed how to hot up a 125. Mid-year, we rode the first Thumper Nats and tested exotic four-strokes including an XR280, DR404 and a CR500/XR350 hybrid.

We analysed the used bike market, joined the A4DE in Bunbury (GE finishing third in Vets), and played in the Kamfari mud. By August, previews of '94 Yamahas and Hondas arrived, as did a retrospective on how much dirtbikes had evolved in 25 years. Randall Gregory made it three straight at Finke, and we compared the KLX250 to the XR250 and XR280.

In November we covered the emotional aftermath with GE's partner Vicki supplying the photos. We also told how the Yanks won the MXdN for the 13th straight year while Team Australia finished in 13th place. We honoured 90 years of Husqvarna and closed 1993 by naming the KLX250R our Bike of the Year.

1994

WE KICKED off 1994 tackling land closures, then jumped aboard the KX125, tested the Husky WR250 and compared Honda's Dominator and XR600. Roger De Coster featured in a profile, we explored helmet construction and covered Toowoomba's Kings of the Mountain, won by Jeff Leisk and Peter Luczkowski. Interviews with McFarlane and Leisk followed, alongside behind-the-scenes insights into Honda and Suzuki's factory teams.

We pulled apart fork internals, inspected an XR250, offered KX80 hot-up tips, and tested the TM250. Security for bikes was a hot topic, and we gave away a custom Boeri lid. A massive eight-bike 250 enduro shootout took centre stage, alongside a look at the CDR Yamahas and the Z50R. Shane Watts won the Four Day at Denman, with NSW scoring the Trophy and Qld the Junior crown.

We chatted with Shawn Reed, covered Kawasaki's MX squad, and tested the DR650 and Yamaha's Warrior quad. We raced an XR200 at Mt Kembla and tried it in the bush, tuned a WR200, and cheered Gregory's fourth Finke win. The TT-R250 passed ADRs, Elf fuel came under the microscope, and we imagined an electric dirtbike – decades before it was real.

Stuart Morgan's Ballards CR250 enduro iron showed motocross conversions done right and TK announced his impending departure from *ADB*. Bert Flood, who introduced KTM to Australia, lost the distributorship role to the Automotive Holdings Group in WA.

Clubby returned in December, the mag hit 108 pages, and the Cutie Pie comp wrapped up. A big eight-bike trail test closed the year, the Aussie ISDE Junior Trophy team took second in Oklahoma, and the TT-R250 was crowned Bike of the Year.

australasian
DIRT BIKE
Print Post approved – PP255003/01286
MARCH 1994, ISSUE 174
$4.50 ($5.95 NZ incl. GST)*
KTM300
An open-classer for all
FACTORY PAST
Gall vs Gunter,
YZ vs RM
YAMAHA YZ80
Hot-Ups
Go fast for under 200 bucks!
HUSKY WR125
We test the World Champ Replica
TEAM HONDA
CR set-ups from the biggest team in Oz.
What the pros ride to work

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DIRT BIKE
RULE: KTM 300GS
KING HIT! HUSKY'S WILD 360WR
SNEAK PEEK KAWASAKI'S HOT NEW PERIMETER FRAMED KDX200
VALUE PACKED $4.50

1995

WITH CLUBBY at the helm, *ADB* entered a new phase in 1995. We started strong with tests of the KTM 125 and 250 MXers, DT200, RMX250 and a three-way 80cc shootout. We surveyed hydration packs, reported on MANSW rising from the ashes of the ACU, and fired the first shots in berm warfare with a six-way 250 motocross test. The TT600 Belgarda debuted, the 125WR Husky impressed as a giant killer, and the 50cc LEM CR2 proved a pint-sized weapon. Honda's wild EXP-2 rally prototype made an appearance, and the Cutie Pies returned—briefly.

Inside looks at Team UFO Suzuki and CDR Yamaha followed, along with tests of the KTM 300GS, Husky 360WR, TYZ250, and perimeter-framed KDX200. We ran a boot comparison, a five-way 250 enduro battle, tested the DR350SE and KLR250, and pitted the CR500 against the KX500. "Thump-out" featured the TT250R, DR250SE, XR250R and KLX250E, while the Sinisalo Girl replaced the Cutie Pies.

We spoke with Team Green Kawasaki riders Eddie Warren and Peter Melton, and looked into rider fitness testing at the AIS. We checked out the KTM 400GS and SC, covered the Thumper Nats, Vintage Nats, A4DE, WA Adventure Rally and Allora 500, and spoke with the Xtreme Honda and KTM teams.

We unleashed the Wazza Nose page on unsuspecting readers and wrapped the year celebrating Australia's ISDE Junior Trophy win by Shane Watts, Jamie and Ian Cunningham, tested the new XR400, KX125/250, and three Thumper Nats racers – capping a massive year for *ADB*.

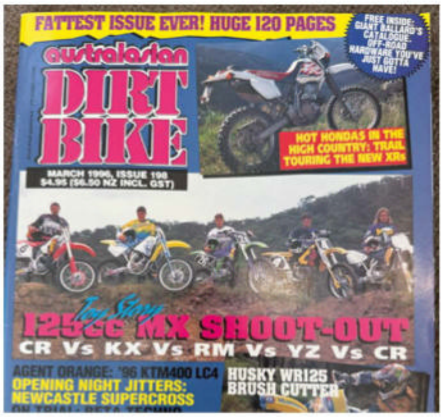
1996

WE HIT 1996 at full throttle with Jeff Leisk taking the Thumper Nats Pro Class and Craig Dack unveiling Miller beer as his new team sponsor. We went behind the scenes at the Polish ISDE, joined 900 riders at the Blue Light Rally, and published Geoff Ballard's take on the XR400. The KLX300 broke cover and Craig Anderson bagged both the King of Supercross crown in WA and the first round of the Aussie Supercross Championship in Newcastle.

In March, the mag included a Ballards 'cattle dog' and the YZ125 topped our five-bike shootout. Shane Watts graced the cover, a full set of Wulf gear was up for grabs, and the WR250 scored ADR compliance via Bert Flood. We celebrated our 200th issue with Wattsie's seven-page riding secrets, a goggle comparison and a look back at two decades of dirt.

The Gympie Four Day saw Watts take outright honours. Clubby racked up 2750km on the XTZ660 Ténéré, we tested the FE600 Husaberg and pitted the XR250RT against the TT250R. We followed a trio of soft-core trailies – XL250 Degree, DR200SE and XT250 – from Cairns to the Cape and back in eight days.

Husky and KTM 1997 enduros arrived, we rode five Thumper Nats racebikes, interviewed Jeremy McGrath, and launched our new AMX section. By year's end, we tested the CR250R, YZ250, KX125, RM125 and WR250Z, rode Orioli's Safari bike, and named our top 10 bikes of '96. Plus, in true *ADB* style, we wrapped up with some not-so-serious annual awards.


FATTEST ISSUE EVER! HUGE 120 PAGES
australasian
DIRT BIKE
MARCH 1996, ISSUE 198
HOT HONDAS IN THE HIGH COUNTRY: TRAIL TOURING THE NEW XRs
125cc MX SHOOT-OUT
CR Vs KX Vs RM Vs YZ Vs CR
AGENT ORANGE: '96 KTM400 LC4
OPENING NIGHT JITTERS: NEWCASTLE SUPERCROSS
HUSKY WR125 BRUSH CUTTER

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DIRT BIKE
LESS IS MORE: KTM 360SX
UPPER CLASS: TM300 ENDURO
LEE HOGAN: KICKIN' ASS & TAKIN' NAMES!
FIRST RIDE: '97 HUSKY TE610 THE WAIT IS OVER!
CHUNKY 108 PAGE ISSUE!
SPECIAL REPORT
MOTOCROSS SECTION INSIDE:
FIRST MINI RIDE: ACTION OUTLAW
INTERVIEW: MIKE SHEARER

1997

THE YEAR opened with big questions around Honda's alloy-framed CR250R. We kicked things off with a 600cc trailbike shootout, first rides on KTM's latest thumpers, and Glen Bell taking the Thumper Nats series. Clubby reported from the Tokyo Supercross, and we looked into the ATK 260LQ, 350DS and 605DS.

Jeremy McGrath stunned fans with his switch to Suzuki, Yamaha's YZM400F broke cover, and Lee Hogan won the Newcastle Supercross Masters. We ran a five-way 250 motocross comparo, previewed the Thumper Nats and tested the Husky TE610, TM300 enduro and KTM 360SX. Hogan backed it up with a win in Melbourne.

In May, Glen Bell's XR630 graced the cover, we ran a jacket buyer's guide, chatted with Michael Byrne, and visited the AMA Motocross pits in Florida. Shane Watts won his fifth straight A4DE in Manjimup, we tested the ADR-approved KDX200 and KLX300, and Team Suzuki walked us through race-bike setup.

The TT600R got its first test, Clubby got hitched, and *ADB* became the top-selling dirtbike mag in Australia. Watts wrapped up the World Enduro title and we previewed 1998's bikes. October's 132-pager featured the KTM200EXC and world champ Watts. We wrapped up with trailbike shootouts, the WR125 Husky, KTM 300EXC, and the hybrid CR440X – an XR400/ CR250 hybrid.

1998

WE OPENED 1998 with Chad Reed on the cover blasting a berm aboard the now-compliant RMX250. We raved about Yamaha's YZ400F, spoke with Joel Smets and Jeff Emig, and offered one as a subscriber prize. Setup tips flowed, and we compared the KTM 250, RMX250 and WR-Z. We tested the Husky TE610 and Husaberg FE400E, covered the return of the Kings of the Mountain Dirt Track, and explored Yamaha's YZ80 Big Wheel.

A head-to-head between the Husky TE410 and KTM SC400 followed, we spoke with Dakar podium-finisher Andy Haydon and visiting enduro ace Mika Ahola. Eddie Warren returned to race a Ballards XR630 in the Thumper Nats, and Team Suzuki shared RMX setup secrets while Shane Watts prepared to defend his World Title.

June brought Kim Ashkenazi to the cover, a first look at the WR400F, Honda's SL230 relaunch, and Merriman's A4DE win. We covered the chaos of France's Le Touquet Beach Race, Clubby and Tom Foster led a subscriber ride to Cape York, and *ADB's* USA Supertour visited Vegas and San Bernardino. Craig Anderson dominated round one of the Thumper Nats, and we later rode his YZ400F.

Michael Byrne, the new 125 MX champ, hit the September cover, we previewed '99 bikes, and Chad Reed debuted as a columnist. Shane Watts returned to the cover in November, the TT-R250 launched, and we tested Ben Grabham's DR250R Thumper Nats weapon. We ended the year with a five-way 250 MX shootout, Ando's Thumper Nats title, and Bike of the Year going to the YZ400F.

GOLD RUSH
SUZUKI

1999

THERE WAS plenty of reason to celebrate the ISDE results in January – we needed 22 pages to tell the stories – but the headline was Shane Watts smoking the world's best on a 125. Up-and-comer Ben Grabham took out the new 250 four-stroke class, and Australia placed third in the World Trophy, Junior Trophy and Club Teams. February saw us giving away a Watts Replica KTM 125EXC, testing the RM125, TM250 and KTM 620LC4, and running an exclusive Gold Card trip to Cape York. Then it was the X-Treme Games, Supercross Masters, and a deep dive into trick ISDE bikes, Team Castrol KTM's transporter, and the WR250, KTM 125EXC and CR125R.

Stuart Morgan's WR400F featured on the cover, we compiled 100 great products under $100, and reviewed the Orange, Brisbane and Adelaide Supercross rounds. Chad Reed – fresh 250 Supercross Champ – fronted the May cover, we previewed Yamaha's DT230, toured the Whitsundays, and tested the Husky Super Motard and the full Oneal Honda race fleet. July brought a Mojave Desert trail tour, another USA super tour, and Watts dominating the A4DE on a 125.

Rick Hall won Finke, we tested trials bikes feet-up, and Clubby departed on an extended OS trip. Prototypes of the YZ125/250, KTM 400/520EXC and TM 400 appeared in September, alongside a glimpse at the CRM250 subscriber prize. Kim Ashkenazi led the October issue on a KX250, EMAP acquired ADB, and Andy Wigan took over as Editor in November. We wrapped with Michael Byrne's Superdome win (Troy Dorron took the 125 class), the debut of the XR650, and a Jeff Emig tell-all.

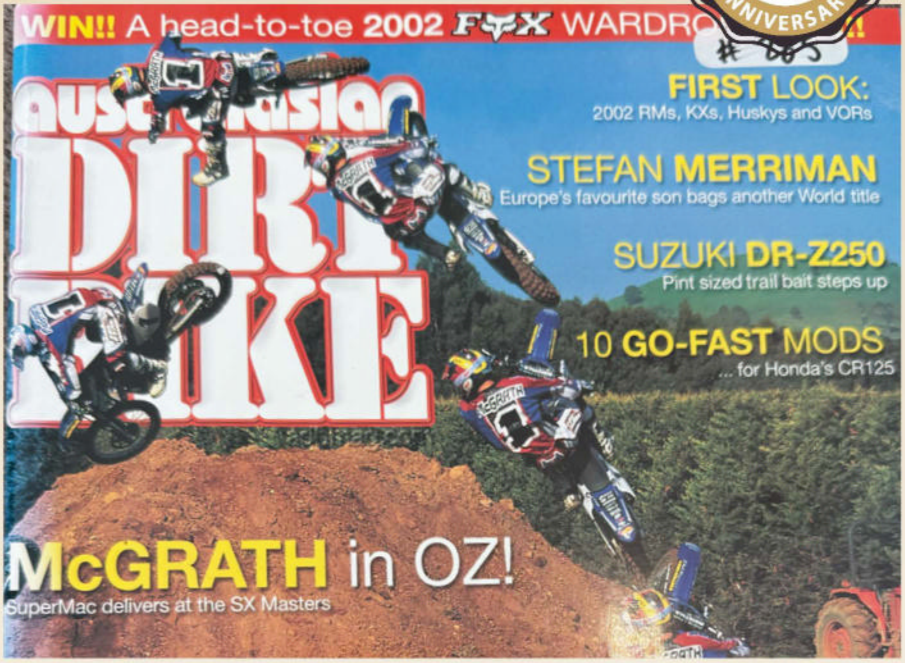
THE NOUGHTIES

2000

WE ROUNDED off the 20th century with a Mega Test Fest of the YZ426F, TM250, KTM 300EXC and both XR Hondas, the 250 and 400. We explained Andrew McFarlane's decision to sign with Kawasaki, included a buyer's guide to hydration systems, and previewed the Aussie round of the World 500 Motocross GP. We also covered the Brisbane X-Treme Games and sat down for a beer with freestyle pioneer Carey Hart. Interviews with Joel Smets and Stefan Everts featured alongside our first ride of the WR400F and a full test of the KTM 520EXC, as Shane Watts launched his US racing campaign.

The new YZ250F launched off the July cover, we looked at Honda's upcoming CRs and Ballard's TTR320. Kevin Schwantz spoke about riding the Safari, and we covered the opening Thumper Nats round. We ran an oil and lube guide, YZ426 and DR-Z400 mods, a NSW GNCC wrap, and Wigan's infamous filterless Finke run. Stefan Merriman won the 250 World Enduro title, and we covered SX, Conondale, Bathurst Thumper rounds and the Oakdale Juniors.

December wrapped the year with a six-way 250 motocross shootout (won by Honda), 15 XR650 mods, a full YZ250F test, and coverage of the Daily Planet Red Light Desert Race — sponsored by a brothel, proving we'll support out-of-industry backers too.


WIN!! A head-to-toe 2002 FOX WARDRO
Australasian DIRT BIKE
FIRST LOOK:
2002 RMs, KXs, Huskys and VORs
STEFAN MERRIMAN
Europe's favourite son bags another World title
SUZUKI DR-Z250
Pint sized trail bait steps up
10 GO-FAST MODS
... for Honda's CR125
McGRATH in OZ!
SuperMac delivers at the SX Masters

2001

THE NEW century kicked off with Michael Byrne's switch from Honda to Jeff Emig Kawasaki in the US. We tested the KTM 520SX, covered the Supercross Masters, and ran a six-way quad shootout. Stefan Merriman made history by taking outright ISDE honours on a four-stroke — the first in 30 years. February's world exclusive was the WR250F launch, compared with the WR400 and WR426. Josh McFarlane and Mark Skerret won Toowoomba's Kings of the Mountain and we featured the Melbourne X-Treme Games and the American Hill Climb Championship in Montana.

We asked if Chad Reed could become our next World Champ, previewed the Smets vs Everts showdown for a fifth title, and tested Husky's TE400 and 570. Merriman won the A4DE in NZ, we did a 400cc enduro shootout, farewelled the Sinisalo Girls, and covered Le Touquet's epic beach race. The open class MX bikes were next for comparison and we got wind of the Crusty World Tour hitting Oz. McFarlane, Reed, and Coppins all scored top 10s in the World MX GP opener, and Watts impressed in the US GNCC.

McFarlane's podium in the third round of the World Motocross Championships at Broadford showed our locals could mix it with the world's best. We tested nine YZ250F pipes, examined Stefan Everts' factory bike, pub-crawled the High Country, launched the Thumper Nats, and dissected MA's unleaded fuel rule. A foldout Crusty whip cover featured Danny Ham and Ben Jones, and we tested Troy Carroll's YZ250F while breaking news on Honda's CR450F.

Mark Avard tested Daryl Hurley's DR-Z440 for our September issue. We offered air-filter tips, WR250F hot-ups, and checked out Stephen Greenfield's XR650. A Jeremy McGrath time-lapse cover led into Craig Dack's 10-year career retrospective and a look at MA's fuel rules pushback. In November we tested the CR450F – also a subscriber prize – looked at dirt drag racing, insurance, theft prevention, and Editor Andy Wigan finished the Safari. Team Oz finished fourth and ninth in the ISDE Senior and Junior Trophies.

The year closed with NZ third and Australia sixth at the MXdN. We spoke with Chad Reed, wrapped up the Thumper Nats and Supercross Masters, and pondered the future of two-strokes in a four-stroke world.

2002

WE BEGAN the year with a big-bore thumper shootout, the Paris Supercross, and the NZ MX Nationals. Red Bull City-X wowed Sydney, we spoke with promoter Kevin Williams and the Kiwi trio King, Coppins and Hurley. April saw Chad Reed score his first US Supercross win and a double-sided poster giveaway. We tested the GASGAS 200, 250 and 300 and covered the Oceania Women's MX Champs.

We celebrated 10 years of Thumper Nats in May and trail boss Heffo shared his best riding tips. June brought a shootout with bikes from Grabbo (YZ250F), Wonka (KTM 300EXC), Stuart Morgan (WR250F) and Stuart Bennett (KTM 450EXC), plus a CRF450 pipe comparison. July's cover featured Craig Anderson chasing Darryll King, and we asked if four-strokes had taken over. We checked out the EFI GASGAS 400, shared tech tips, and listed 12 mods for the XR650.

Grabbo edged Williscroft at the A4DE in WA, we previewed Yamaha's WR450F and KX250, fitted a 540 kit to a KTM520 and tested Suzuki's LT-Z400 quad. Metzger's backflip featured on our September cover with a premix ratio card, and Wigan rode his third Finke but couldn't knock Hall, Greenfield or Williscroft off the podium. October lined up the Maico 490 against the KTM 525SX and a full KTM EXC comparo. We asked YZ125 or YZ250F?

November gifted readers a Reed poster, a YZ450F test, resale tips and insights from Carmichael, Everts, Pichon and Stewart. We ended 2002 with Australia beating 13 countries to win the World Cup of Motocross, with NZ ninth and the YZ450F crowned Bike of the Year.

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CARMICHAEL
LUSK
PASTRANA
McGRATH
REED
TRAILBIKE SET-UP TIPS
HOW TO:
AH-Q FUGITIVES IN MEXICO

2003

WE BEGAN 2003 with the WR250F that Ballard and Grabbo built, ridden by Stuart Morgan, and ran a five-way 250cc motocross shootout. We covered the World Speedway GP, NZ MX Nationals, and the Blue Light Rally. The all-new CRF250R was a cover star, and we tested Yamaha's WR250F and 450F. Reed blazed to victory at Anaheim 1, and we analysed the factory two-strokes of Carmichael, Pastrana, Lusk, McGrath and Reed.

April gave away a double-sided Reed, Hurley and Byrne poster and featured the 450 enduro shootout and Supercross Masters coverage. May offered another poster with Craig Anderson and a model minding Broomy's YZ450F. We explored tricked-out RM85s, rode in NZ's north island, and heard from Bubba Stewart.

Grabbo secured another A4DE crown in SA, while we went adventure riding in South Africa with Alfie Cox and Andy Caldecott. We also attended the first Australian Supermoto Championship and shared WR450F race-proven mods. Darryll King tested Reed's WSX-winning YZ250, we crossed the Simpson Desert, celebrated King and Carroll's MX Championship wins, and toured the Alpinestars factory.

Merriman clinched his third World Title, we reviewed 100 years of Husqvarna, and examined reactive suspension with Terry Hay. We tested the YZ125, YZ250 and KFX700, and cheered Darren Griffiths who was first back to Alice from Finke.

2004

WHAT BETTER way to start 2004 than a four-way battle to find the best 250F motocrosser? We went adventuring in the Kimberleys, heard from Jay Marmont and Troy Carroll on their 2003 Supercross season, saw 615 riders at the Sunny Corner Rally, and explored the Barkbusters story. Team Australia placed fifth in the ISDE Trophy and sixth in the Junior Trophy, while Stefan Everts took the individual win.

We ran a six-way 450 enduro shootout and pitched the YZ250F against five 125 two-strokes. Shayne King cleaned up the NZ MX Nationals and the KTM 950 Adventure S landed in Oz. Hurley won the WSX opener, Reed the AMA. We answered 10 Honda FAQs, shared holeshot tips from Reed, and debuted the CRF250X.

Caldecott's Dakar run, another USA Supertour, and Merriman's WEC campaign (joined by Stapleton, Whibley and Smith) filled May. We revealed secrets of Wonka's 450EXC, and the TC250/450 Husqvarnas. Kearney took Four Day honours, we tested the GASGAS 450FSE, ADR CRF250X, and 2WD WR450F 2-Trac. We also looked at Townley's $25k KTM MXGP racer and covered Mr Motocross.

BONUS FREE 36-Page BALLARD'S CATALOGUE Inside
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DIRT BIKE
FIRST RIDE
SUZUKI'S
DR-Z400
An out-of-the-crate race winner
ANDREA BARTOLINI
DAVID VUILLEMIN
XTREME GAMES
FACTORY TEAM SECRETS
CAREY HART
AUSSIE WORLD 500cc GP UPDATE
SHANE WATTS INTERVIEW
Watts he thinking where's he going
HUSQVARNA 610T
Big-bore Bushman
PLUS

THERE CAN ONLY BE ONE!
FOUR

2005

WE KICKED off 2005 with a redesigned layout and full-throttle coverage of the racing scene, including the 2004 Supercross Masters, NZ MX Nationals and Aussie Dirt Track titles. A five-way 450 enduro shootout was matched by impressions of the KX250F, RM-Z250 and WR250F, plus snowy trail riding in Canberra.

A massive 12-bike test of both 125s and 250s from Kawasaki, Honda, Husky, Suzuki and Yamaha, plus KTM and TM 125s. We rode Merriman's WRs, hit the Hawaii trails with McGrath and covered the ATV Nationals and Supermoto titles. The 250 and 450 enduro shootouts featured KTM, GASGAS and Husky two-strokes alongside the 450EXC. We put Honda's CR250 and CRF450 back to back, interviewed the Moss brothers and tested 10 quads.

The new Off-Road Series saw AJ Roberts star, we listed 21 bumbag must-haves, named the 10 worst dirtbikes, explored insurance and questioned if the CRF450X was a category killer. We tested DR650, KTM 625SXC and XR650, previewed the '06 Japanese bikes, and rode the KTM 250SXF and BMW HP2. October marked *ADB's* 30th with a special Roger Harvey cover, 30 milestone moments, and factory bike tests.

We closed out 2005 with tests of the KX450F and new alloy YZFs, a Pro Lites shootout, Husky's full range, and tech on expansion chambers. Australia finished fifth in the ISDE World Trophy, seventh in Junior and 14th in the MXdN.

2006

WE BEGAN 2006 with shootouts of 450 motocrossers and Euro 300 enduro machines, alongside features on budget helmets, boot care, two-stroke tuning and fitness tips. An eight-bike 450 enduro comparison followed, plus pipe maintenance tips, a TE610 Husky test and exclusive ride of the 2007 KTM 250EXC-F. The twin-cylinder Aprilia RXV4.5 shook the enduro scene, we tested four Euro 250 two-strokes and compared cable vs hydraulic clutches, while checking in on Andrew McFarlane and Brett Metcalfe in the US.

April brought the CRF250X test, TM EN530 ride and a chat with James Stewart. We pitched CRF250X against WR250F and compared the KTM 525, TM 530 and Husaberg 550. The Beta RR 450 and 525 were tested as well as the Honda CRF150F. More KX450F project updates came, plus first impressions of the KTM 250EXC-F and WR250F 290 big bore kit.

We covered the MX Nationals and AORC, rode Byrne's KX450F, featured the Seven Deadly Sins ride, interviewed Katherine Prumm and reviewed the KTM 950 Super Enduro R and BMW R 1200 GS Adventure. Honda stunned everyone by axing the XR line-up. Juha Salminen won the A4DE, Ryan Branford won Finke, and we previewed KTM's upcoming range.

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Clubman set-up tips
2006 HONDA CRF250X
Taking the battle to Yamaha!
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JAMES STEWART
Outgrowing "Bubba" & beating Reed & RC
ADVENTURE
SOUTH AMERICA
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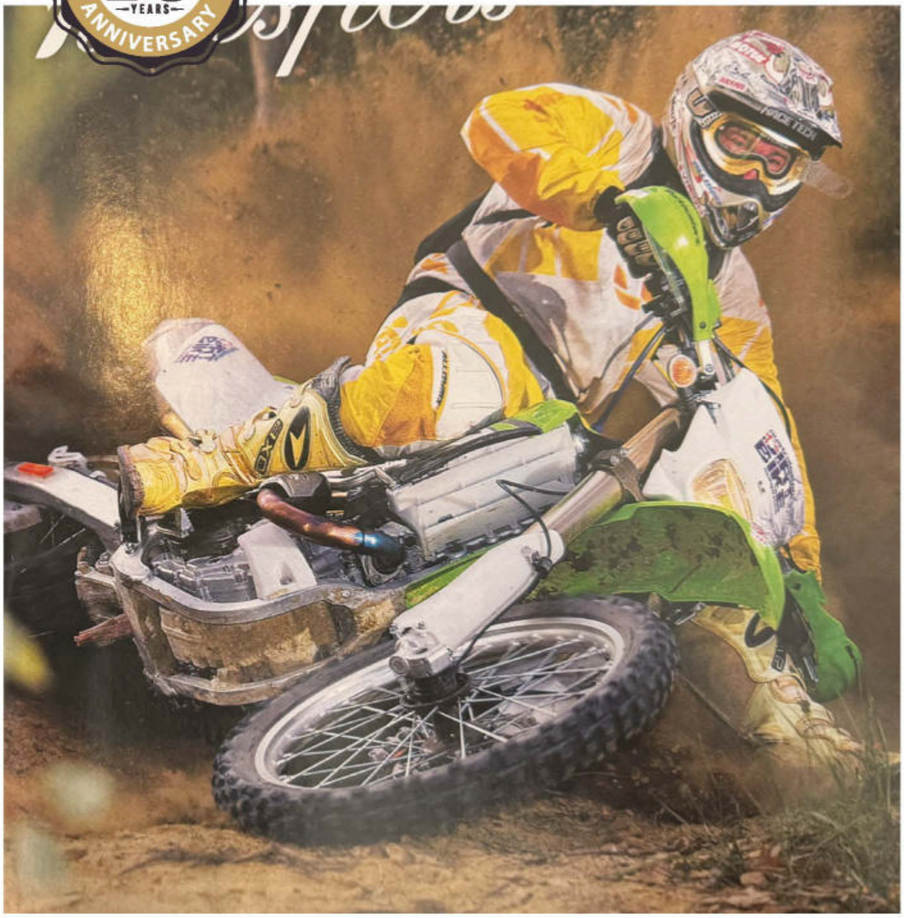
CHAIN TENSION
Have you got it right?
OFF-CAMBER RUTS



2007

WE STARTED 2007 with a 16-page 450 motocross shootout, CRF450X upgrade analysis, a chat with Josh Coppins and jumping tips from Ryan Marmont. In the 450 enduro comparison, the WR450F came out on top. We also rode Salminen's GNCC-winning KTM 250XC and recapped ISDE results: sixth for Australia and seventh for NZ in the Trophy, third and 10th in the Junior Trophy.

We tested 250cc motocrossers and enduros, reviewed the Aprilia RXV450 and Beta RR450, and examined springs, gearing and steering dampers. A 300cc two-stroke shootout featured GASGAS, KTM and TM, and a big-bore four-stroke comparo included Aprilia, TM, KTM, Husaberg, Husqvarna and Sherco.

We enduroised a RM-Z250, rode the BMW G 650 XChallenge, reviewed pit bikes, and compared four Euro 250 two-stroke enduros. Our race coverage included the Condo 750, Aussie Supercross, WEC Round One and Tumbulgum Motocross. Joel Smets joined BMW for its new 450 enduro project, and we tested the KLX450R.

August brought Finke glory for Grabham, a $35k WRM450MX1 test, and reviews of the TM144, YZ250, YZ450 and a Yamaha HL500 vs YZ450 comparison. The KTM enduro range, Erzberg Rodeo and A4DE win for David Knight also featured. We rode Daniel Reardon's KX450F, a Husky WR250, the KFX450R and revealed our 10 best crash shots.

November saw debuts of the new KX250F, KX450F and KTM's 450 and 525EXCs. AJ Roberts wrapped up the AORC and Grabbo added a Safari win. In December, we rode his Honda 450X, a CRF450R with steering damper, a XT660R and a Ballards WR400F. Australia had no MXoN result, but the Australian Junior Motocross Nationals showcased the next generation.

SHOOTOUT 2008 450cc MXers
CRF450R v KX450F v YZ450F v 450SX-F
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'07 CHILEAN ISDE
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ONDA's '08 CRF250X
ore race-ready than ever
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HE 40TH BAJA 1000
6 miles of Mexico madness
NTERVIEW
ETER BOYLE
sensation heads off-road
FIRST TEST
FUEL-INJECTED
'08 HUSKY

2008

***ADB* WAS** bought by publisher ACP, kicked off the year with Suzuki's EFI RM-Z450, and we ran our annual 250 motocross shootout. Carmichael's racebike still had a carb. The *ADB* Awards were now a formal affair, with Ballard and Gall inducted into the Hall of Fame and John Hall earning the Geoff Eldridge Lifetime Achievement Award.

The EFI TE450 Husky made the February cover, backed by tests of the CRF250X, coverage of the Baja 1000, Blue Light Rally, and Australia's sixth-place finish at the ISDE. We ran 250 enduro shootouts, tested Husky TXC hybrids and TM 450Fes, and reviewed the Christini AWD kit. David Knight won the AMA Endurocross, Taddy Blazusiak ruled Last Man Standing, and we asked if Chad Reed could be stopped in the AMA SX.

We compared CRF450X and KTM 450EXC-R, WR250R vs GASGAS FSR515, and ran a 250 vs 300 smoker comparison. We covered Maddison's 351ft jump, tested the KTM 690 Enduro, BMW R1200GS Adventure and big-bore enduros.

July featured Husaberg's radical 70-degree 450FE and a multi-capacity enduro comparo. Chris Hollis won the A4DE. We then rode Reed's YZ450F, BMW's G450X and shared pro setup secrets. Sam Maclachlan took the editor's chair in September as the mag switched from staples to perfect binding.

We rode the TE310, compared the G450X and WR450F, and toured through Coober Pedy and the Simpson Desert. November ran 212 pages with the Transalp, CRF450R and Antoine Meo's TE450. Grabbo won the Safari, Ivan Cervantes won the Six Day, and Chris Hollis took the AORC. December wrapped with 228 pages and a Reed replica RM-Z giveaway.

2009

WE OPENED 2009 with a 450 MX showdown between Honda, Yamaha and Kawasaki, dissected the WEC winners, tested the FE450 Berg, TT-R230 and KX450F, and rode Philippaerts' MX1-winning YZ450FM. Grabbo and Hollis raced Neal Bates in his Corolla S2000 – the car edged them out by a whisker. We tested Reed's race bike, matched up the 300cc enduro contenders, attended the Blue Light ride and recapped Super X and AMA SX.

The *ADB* Awards were a major social event with Gary Flood and Anthony Gunter entering the Hall of Fame and Laurie Alderton receiving the GE Lifetime Achievement Award. Next came the 250 enduro shootout, a test of the TE510, a look at a customer-ready desert-spec KTM, and interviews with Alderton and Brett Metcalfe. We reviewed the AMA Endurocross final, sized up Australia's fittest pro rider and tested the YFZ450R, KTM 690 Enduro and Husky TC250. A four-way enduro comparison pitted radical new designs from BMW and Husaberg against KTM and Yamaha.

In October, Blake Williams starred at the X Games, Jay Marmont won the Aussie MX Nats, Jacob Smith took the Safari, and we rated the YZ250F. November brought the reverse-head YZ450F, the Zero electric MX bike, and Toby Price won the AORC. The year closed with CRF250R EFI testing, Chris Hollis sampling the AORC-winning bikes and Australia finishing seventh at the MXoN.

australasian DIRT BIKE
INAUGURAL DBOTY
FRASER ISLAND
WHERE TO RIDE GUIDE
HOW TO:
MX NATS

THE TWENTY TEENS

2010

WE KICKED off 2010 with a 16-page 250 motocross shootout and debunked EFI myths. Paul Whibley and Josh Strang went one-two in the GNCC, and we scored first rides on the Suzuki RMX450Z and reverse-head Yamaha YZ450F. The Service Honda CR500AF scared us silly, then we compared the Yamaha YZ144, KTM 250SX and Honda CRF250R. Jeff Leisk joined the Hall of Fame, Arthur Blizzard earned the GE Lifetime Achievement Award, and we listed the nine best riders never to win a title.

The Yamaha WR450F, Sherco 3.0iF, Beta 400RR and Husqvarna TE510 faced off, and we chatted with Taddy Blazusiak and Bartosz Oblucki. Subscribers were offered a $100K ute/camper/boat package. We tested the Suzuki RMX450Z, KTM 350 SX-F and Kawasaki KLX110, plus five 250F enduros. A 450 enduro stoush followed, joined by rides of the Ducati Multistrada and Husqvarna TE630. Toby Price won the A4DE and the big-bore enduro test headlined July.

Toby Price began his Finke dominance in August, we reviewed the Christini AWD KTM and crowned the Husaberg FE570 as DBOTY. We farewelled Andrew 'Sharky' McFarlane and previewed Husaberg's first two-stroke, the TE 300. September saw a Husqvarna launch for the TE449, TE310 and TE250, and a multi-level AORC feature from the perspectives of Pro, Expert and Clubman riders. We questioned the single-spring fork on the Kawasaki KX250F.

2011

WE OPENED 2011 with a 300cc two-stroke shootout, rode Antoine Meo's EWC-winning Husqvarna TE250, and updated readers on our project Yamaha YZ450F. Josh Strang's GNCC victory on US soil was a standout, and we covered Jacob Smith's Honda CRF450X Dakar weapon before switching gears to the tiny Husqvarna CR50. We tested the Husky TE/TC449 and celebrated Josh Hansen's Super X win, profiled four fast female racers, and partied at the ADB Awards where Vince Tesoriero entered the Hall of Fame and Chris Cater earned the GE Lifetime Achievement Award.

March brought sad news with the passing of Tony Kirby. We speculated on the future of dirtbike tech, compared seven 450 motocrossers, and revisited Jacob Smith's 32nd in Dakar. The Husqvarna TE511 and TM EN250 were tested, and we staged a nine-bike 450 enduro showdown. A three-way FMX chat with Blake Williams, Cameron Sinclair and Robbie Maddison featured, along with an AORC preview and an AMA Supercross top five analysis, including Chad Reed.

We spotlighted the Suzuki DR-Z400E, compared five 250F motocrossers, and reviewed AORC rounds. June saw the loss of Paul Broomfield, a Shinray XY250GY test, and excitement around Toby Price's KTM 350 EXC-P. Six various capacity enduro bikes went head-to-head, and the KTM EXC range was dissected. Mark Monea's front flip shocked FMX fans, NSW discussed Rec Rego, and Chad Reed shared his Supercross progress.

Matt Shields became Editor in August, Ben Grabham won another Finke, and we tackled EFI fixes, theft prevention, and launched the new Kawasaki KX450F. Husaberg's 2012 models arrived in October, alongside DIY tips, a YZ450F bush analysis, and the quirky Ossa TR280i trials bike. We rode Brett Metcalfe's RM-Z450, conducted a multi-capacity enduro test, and covered the 7200km APC Rally. At the ISDE in Finland, Australia placed 13th in World Trophy, fifth in Junior, and third in Women's.

We closed the year comparing two-strokes and four-strokes, tested the KTM Freeride 350 and Pro Open MX Nats bikes, and wrapped with the Kawasaki KLX140.

BIKE
How to make money from your bike
2012 METAL
First Ride: KX250F & YZ250F
MEGA! 212 PAGES
DECEMBER 2

THE 450 HUNGER GAMES
This is the premier off-road ... put for the title of 2012

2012

IN 2012, Husqvarna's TE449 surprised with ABS, and Ossa slotted its reverse cylinder, injected two-stroke into 250 and 300 enduro models. We tested factory KTM MXGP bikes, the Smith brothers' GHR Honda Safari weapons, and looked at the history of minibikes. Jay Marmont joined Kawasaki, Matt Moss headed to the US, and KTM's electric Freeride made headlines alongside our first ride of the 2012 WR450F.

Australia took third at the Motocross of Nations, the first Vintage Mr Motocross was staged, and the *ADB* Awards saw John Hederics and Chris Watson enter the Hall of Fame while Steve Cotterell claimed the GE Lifetime Achievement Award. We tested the 450 motocross field again, rode with Ford Performance Racing's Steve Richards and Mark Winterbottom, and tackled downhill and jumping advice from the pros.

A 250F motocross comparison led into Super X discussions, GASGAS EC300, EC300R and EC250F tests, and a V-Strom 650 pub crawl. We tried the Sherco SE3.0i, BMW G650GS Sertao and Shineray 250SM, before staging a nine-bike 450 enduro showdown, and even rode a Triumph Tiger on Swedish ice. Dean Mellor became Editor in July, KTM's 450 SX-F hit the cover, and we tested the full KTM range. The Supercross Championship returned under IEG, James Stewart ditched Yamaha for Suzuki, and the McGrath-inspired 2013 CRF450R headlined the following month.

2013

WE HIT 400 issues with the 300-page January release and celebrated by offering a CRF450R as a prize. We looked back at the origins of dirtbiking in Australia and revisited some of the best and worst bikes ever featured in *ADB*. We previewed the Aussie attack on Dakar with Ben Grabham, Rod Faggotter and Matt Fish.

The year rolled on with a six-bike 450 motocross comparison, the release of the GASGAS range and BMW F800, and the *ADB* Awards night, where Craig Dack entered the Hall of Fame and Damien Ryan received the Geoff Eldridge Lifetime Achievement Award. We examined the cost of running two-strokes versus four-strokes, gave tyre-buying advice, ran the 250F motocross shootout, and tested the Christini AWD 300 and 450.

April brought the six-bike 450 enduro stoush, the KTM 1190 Adventure test, and advice on starting a motocross career. We compared the KX250F and YZ250, pitted the GASGAS TXT Pro 280 against the Jotagas JT280, and rode the Sherco SE 300IR, Husqvarna 650 Terra and profiled Graham Jarvis.

July saw a massive 23 bikes tested, including the 300cc enduro five-way, KTM and Sherco launches, the Husky WR125 and 1190 Adventure R. We reported on Ben Townley's retirement and Husaberg's demise. The new Japanese 450s headlined August, along with Euro 500cc bush weapons, TM's 144 and 250, the Sherco X-Ride 290, and Todd Smith's Finke win. Kawasaki's KX450F took out DBOTY.

We remembered Geoff Eldridge on the 20th anniversary of his death, profiled Chad Reed, and recapped Josh Green's Hattah win. Daniel Milner claimed the A4DE, we tested a slew of bikes including the Sherco ST305 trials machine, and highlighted Matt Phillips' E1 class win in the WEC. Jess Gardiner and Jemma Wilson impressed on the world stage, while Dean Ferris and Meghan Rutledge finished top 10 in their MXGP and WMX titles.

Daniel Milner won the AORC, and Rachel Hewitt scored the TE310R subscriber prize. The year ended with rave reviews for the KTM-developed Husqvarnas, a Women's Trophy win at the ISDE, fourth in the World Trophy, another near-miss at the MXoN, and Rod Faggotter's Safari win for Yamaha.

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WORDS / DYLAN RUDDY PHOTOGRAPHY / DYLAN RUDDY & STUART BOWES

OPERATION DESERT STORM

THE WHOOPED OUT FINKE RACE COURSE WRECKS BIKES AND DRIVES GROWN MEN TO TEARS

2014

A NEW YEAR brought Mitch Lees into the editor's chair, and we opened with a David versus Goliath shootout between the Husqvarna WR125 and Sherco SE510i. We farewelled the last of the Husaberg line, tested 85cc minis and 250cc two-strokes, and checked out Ben Grabham's factory KTM Dakar bike. March delivered the annual 450 motocross shootout, Milner's factory YZ250F test, the Beta 350RR and 400RR, and an interview with David Knight, who announced his shift to Extreme Enduro. Ted Goddard joined the Hall of Fame and Len Williamson received the Geoff Eldridge Lifetime Achievement Award at the *ADB* Awards.

We asked if 300 2T or 500 4T enduros were king with KTM and Husaberg the contestants, then lined up the 250cc motocrossers again. Dakar and Troy Bayliss Classic race reports followed, as did a ride with the DSMRA from Canberra to Tumut. In May, Chad Reed denied retirement rumours, we wrapped up Enduro-X, compared KTM, Husky and 'Berg enduros, and tested the Sherco 300SEF-R against the GASGAS EC300F. The 2015 WR250F was previewed, the 450 enduro class reviewed, and we offered up a pair of DR650s as subscriber prizes. Matt Moss's factory RM-Z450 was ridden, Todd Smith won the Condo 750, and we visited the opening rounds of the World Trials Championship.

Honda's updated CRF450R fronted the cover mid-year, we featured a KLX700R desert special, tested two-stroke MXers, and reported Toby Price's third Finke win. September brought a whopping 41 bikes on test, Price's Hattah win, and the Romaniacs build-up for 20 Aussies. In October, we rode Steve Gall's YZ450F dirt tracker, Kawasaki's KX250F and KX450F, the V-Strom 1000, revisited Romania and travelled through Vietnam.

November highlights included Lee Hogan riding Chad Reed's KX450F in the USA, a state-by-state Rec Rego breakdown, and tests of the Sherco 300SE-R and SEF-R, and the Suzuki RM-Z450. We ended the year with a back-to-back on the 10 top-selling enduro bikes, a CRF250R review, the Yamaha motocross range launch, Rod Faggotter's second Safari win, and AORC titles going to Toby Price and Jessica Gardiner.

2015

JANUARY MARKED 40 years of *ADB* with a 292-page collector's edition and a 450 motocross shootout. We then lined up Honda's CR500 against the CRF450R, pitted the year's 250F motocrossers, featured Gally's tips on sponsorship, and previewed the new Yamaha WR250F. Reed weighed in on 250 two-strokes in MX2, we tested Jacob Wright's CDR YZ450F, and interviewed Ryan Villopoto ahead of his European campaign. Toby Price's third place on Dakar debut made headlines, alongside a mid-cap enduro comparison with bikes from Sherco, KTM, Beta and Husky.

The road-legal Suzuki RMX450Z fronted a cover, we tested Price's KTM 500 EXC desert sled, and faced off Yamaha's YZ250F, WR250F and YZ250FX. We toured Baja and wrapped up the Enduro-X Nationals. In June, we tested Mike Brown's Enduro-X winner, addressed bike theft, and reviewed the 300cc enduro two-strokes.

Beta's oil-injected two-strokes made headlines, Price added another Hattah title, Mitch Lees jetted to France for a Sherco launch, and we attended the Paul Broomfield Memorial Ride. October revealed the new Husqvarnas and future tech insights, while Price sealed the AORC title.

Ownership of *ADB* changed hands to Bideford Black in November. We reported on the controversial reversal at the ISDE which ultimately crowned Australia winners in the World Trophy, Junior Trophy, and Women's Trophy. Yamaha revealed its new YZ250FX two-stroke enduro.

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2016

WE KICKED off 2016 with another 292-page behemoth, including 100 pages of ADV content – from tyre guides and GPS tips to building your own adventure bike. Jack Simpson's modified KTM 250SX was compared to the stocker, Daniel Milner won the Four Day, and we went sideways at the Australian Speedway GP. The WR450F was declared the duck's nuts for bushwork, and we tested the TM EN300 and six 250 motocrossers.

Toby Price's historic Dakar win stole the March spotlight – the first ever by an Aussie. We followed up with an interview, while Lee Hogan rode Gavin Faith's CRF450R, and we pitted the YZ250X against the Sherco 250SE-R. Geoff Braico previewed the AORC season, we tested a GYTR-tuned YZ250F, and the 450 enduros went head-to-head again. Reader's Choice Awards were announced, and Hogan scored an exclusive test of Todd Waters' RM-Z450.

A KTM range launch made July headlines, along with Beau Ralston's WR480F, the Geico Honda CRF250R, and a myth-busting look at the KLR650. We went bush with the Tenere Tragics and splashed through the Kamfari mud. GASGAS EC300 fronted the August issue, we examined the brand's rise and fall, and tested the Husqvarna 701 Enduro. Rob Nowak shared his Erzberg tale, and Tuffy recounted surviving Finke in 190th.

September asked if the KX250F was the fastest yet, we reviewed Hattah and the Beta launch, and caught up with Jeffrey Herlings. In October, the 2017 CRF450R broke cover, Husky's new models arrived, and we rode the SWM RS300R and RS500R. Lee Hogan listed the toughest motocrossers of all time, Dean Ferris lent us his YZ450F, and we rode the AJP PR5, beach raced in Mackay, and checked in with Ben Townley.

December wrapped things up with 10 bikes tested from 250 to 500cc, both two- and four-stroke. We reviewed Kade Mosig's KX450F, Stephen Gall's classic YZ464, celebrated our eighth at the Motocross of Nations, and our girls took the ISDE Women's Trophy for the fourth year in a row.

2017

FIRST CAB off the rank for the month was the KTM 450 EXC-F, and we looked at what was displayed at the EICMA bike show which included the Yamaha T7 Tenere, we attended the Sherco launch, the Speedway GP in Melbourne and Melissa Bruce finished the Sea to Sky in Turkey. Olly Malone took over for this issue as Mitch had a spell in hospital with a shirt full of busted ribs, a punctured lung and shattered collarbone. We asked was the 2017 CRF450R the best ever, and why the YZ450F was preferred to the WR450F in the bush by some top riders, we rode Herlings' MX2 Title winning KTM 250SX-F, and went to Australia's first Straight Rhythm competition in Tasmania. Next it was time to sort out the 300 enduro machinery, test the KTM SX125 and the Husky FX450, Price DNF'ed Dakar with a broken femur but of the other Aussies Todd Smith finished 18th, Matt Hart 44th and Rod Faggotter DNF'ed with a mechanical while running 14th.

The April fools in the next issue was the group of lunatics who rode scooters to Cape York as a buck's party, we had the usual 450 motocross all in brawl, and looked at the AJP PR3 for those on a budget and went to the Troy Bayliss Classic Dirt Track. We did our 250 motocross comparison to declare the 2017 winner as the KTM 250SX-F, then took a SWM RS500R for a squirt and a TT-R 250 and revealed the coming EFI two-strokes from KTM. The fire breathing CR500 Honda featured on the June cover, the 250 enduro machinery went into the ring and we tried out the Beta 430RR. We got to test the fuel injected KTM two-strokes the next month, tried out the KTM 1090 and 1290 against each other, attended the Kowen ride in Canberra, Ryan Dungey took his fourth AMA Supercross title and Lachlan Mainwaring the Condo 750 on his third attempt.

We hit the cover with the news of 18 bikes tested in August plus the first reveal of the Yamaha and Suzuki 450F motocross steeds, we celebrated

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DAKAR FINISHER PAVEY CLIMBS IN NEPAL

Daymon Stokie's Finke victory and looked at the unsung heroes of the race. Citrus Media took over running *ADB* and we also looked at who we regarded as the toughest racers in Australia, those that battled injury to keep going. Then it was time to put Husky, Sherco, Beta and the latest version of the RM-Z450 all through their paces, Hunter Lawrence stopped in to have a yarn, a bunch of Aussies shone at the Nitro World Games and we looked back at bikes long forgotten. There were more new models in October, Milner did a clean sweep of the AORC, our Tech Ed Mat Boyd co-rode with Mark Arnts to report from the Sporties 12 Hour Enduro in Alice Springs and they won the Pro Class in the process.

The following month Dack was claiming he'd do everything to keep Dean Ferris on a Yamaha, we pondered that Milner's 450EXC-F might just be the best ever, we adventure tested the RideADV WR250R and WR450F and our ladies won the Women's Trophy again at the ISDE with the boys making second slot in the World Trophy. The year ended with the launch of the WR250F Yammy, a test of Todd Waters' CRF450R, a comparison between Husky's two and four-stroke 250s and Australia running sixth in the Motocross of Nations.

2018

WE STARTED 2018 with a 260-page issue featuring the 450 motocross shootout, plus tests of the Beta 350RR, V-Strom 650, Red Bull KTMs and a range of Shercos. We then compared 125 motocrossers from Yamaha, Husqvarna and KTM, and sampled big-bore ADV offerings from Honda, BMW, Ducati and KTM. The twin-cam Honda CRF250R got a workout, the Honda and Husky 450s faced off, the KTM 250 EXC-F was compared with the 500 EXC-F, and we tested the FC350 Husky.

April's electric cover bike was the Alta Redshift, while inside the 250 motocrossers went to battle again, as did Sherco's two- and four-stroke options. The Ural outfit got a run, and Toby Price finished third at Dakar. Gas Gas's EC300 was crowned "King of Ding" among the 300cc enduro contenders. Yamaha topped our 250cc two-stroke comparison with KTM and Husky, and we rode the Ducati Scrambler Desert Sled.

To close the year, we tested the CRF450L and Nathan Trigg's Sherco 450SEF-R desert bike, rode the BMW G310GS, and held the annual 450 motocross clash. Yamaha swept the MX Nationals, Daniel Milner took the AORC Outright, and Australia finished fourth at the Motocross of Nations.

2018 ENDURO SHOOTOUT | 300cc TWO-STROKE
OFF-ROAD
WINNER! GAS GAS EC300
Verdict
What about TPI models?

2019

WE STARTED 2019 with Honda's latest CRF450R on the cover, covered all the action from the 2018 Australian Supercross Championship, and reported on Ben Grabham's 25th-place finish at Wildwood Rock, won by Wade Young. The Australian Motorcyclist Association was formed as an alternative to MA.

February featured the WR450F on test and Jacob Smith's CRF450R rally bike. Australia's women won a sixth consecutive ISDE Women's Trophy, and the men claimed the World Trophy. We tested the year's 250 motocrossers, Sherco 300SEF-R and Beta RR200, and noted the passing of Ted Goddard.

Toby Price's Dakar victory with a broken wrist headlined April. We used data logging to compare the Husky FC350 and FC450. The 500cc enduro class went to war again, and we tested the BMW R1250GS, Triumph Scrambler 1200 XE and KTM 85SX. Todd Waters was crowned Mountain Man Motocross champ.

In June we featured a 300cc enduro comparison, rode the BMW F850GSA Rallye and an Oset electric trials bike, and covered the return of the Mint 400 desert race. The KTM enduro range debuted in July, Josh Strang voiced frustration over ISDE team selection, and the Kosciuszko Killer Hard Enduro was launched.

David Walsh claimed Finke after several podiums. We tested the Alta electric bike and revisited Ray Dole's Victa-powered dirtbike. Beta launched its 2020 enduro line-up, we tested four 85cc motocrossers, and Husqvarna's new models arrived. Luke Clout and Meghan Rutledge were crowned King and Queen of MX in NSW.

Braico went to Italy for the Beta launch, we rode the hybrid Gas Gas EC Ranger and reported on ADV rides through Cape York and Bolivia. In November, Yamaha's YZ450F Generation Seven made headlines, we rode Daniel Sanders' AORC-winning Husky FE501, and Jacob Smith won Yellow Mountain.

We closed the year with tests of the KX250, YZ65 and TE250i, and ran a three-way enduro comparison between the Gas Gas EC300, Beta RR350 and WR450F. The Netherlands won the Motocross of Nations, and Australia finished 15th.

19 SHOOTOUT #4 | 500cc ENDURO

Rush hour

IT'S A WILD RIDE AT OUR BIG-BORE FIVE-HUNGE SHOOTOUT

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DIRT BIKE
EXCLUSIVE! INSIDE OUR ISDE CAMP!

THE 2020'S

2020

WE WERE telling you who to watch at Dakar as Toby Price declared he was ready for all challengers. Our test fleet for the month included the RM-Z250, Sherco 250SE, Husky FE350 and KLX230R, and we also caught up with Dan Reardon.

The next issue's big story was Daniel Sanders claiming victory at the ISDE in Portugal. Wildwood Extreme celebrated its 10th running with Wade Young taking his third straight win. We threw a leg over Sanders' FE501, Milner's 350EXC-F, a YZ125X, and Mitch put some miles on the XTZ690.

In March, we featured Rod Faggotter's $50,000 WR450F Rally Replica, looked back at the iconic Harley-Davidson XR750 flat tracker, trialled traction control on the CRF450R and did some laps on a KTM 250SX-F. We spoke to the five Aussies who competed at Dakar, with Price reflecting on the tragic loss of Paulo Goncalves. Kawasaki relaunched the KLX300R (still without compliance) and we gave the Beta RR125 a solid thrashing.

Yamaha led the way with smartphone tuning on the WR250F, Braico got onboard the Beta RR250 Racing, we tested the KLX230 and 450 SX-F, and started rebuilding a 1998 RMX250. We followed up on the WR250R as an ADV Lite, rode Levi Sherwood's KTM 250SX freestyle bike and explored on the Africa Twin 1100. Stefan Granquist's WP-suspended WR450F was featured, we tested the KTM SX-E5 electric kids bike, revealed the finished RMX project, and listed our five finest Aussie racers.

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2021

WE KICKED off the year with a look back at the best bikes of the noughties, then tested Penrite Honda and CDR Yamaha's 450s before heading off-road on the KTM 790 Adventure R – just before it became the 890. February saw the KTM 1290 Super Adventure R headline alongside the CRF450R, Sherco 300SEF-F, and RM-Z450. Rieju hit Australian shores with the MR300, and we balanced on the Sherco 250 Fajardo Replica trials bike.

April's Reader Special showcased tasty home builds. Toby Price crashed out of Dakar with two busted wrists, a leg and shoulder, while water boy Daniel Sanders came home fourth. Jayne White shared her story of an all-female Simpson Desert crossing.

Issue 500 landed in May, fittingly featuring two past Six Day Outright winners – Milner's 2018 KTM 500EXC-F and Sanders' 2019 Husky FE501 – plus interviews with ADB legends. The GASGAS MC 450F hit the cover, the Sherco 300SE Factory got a workout, and we updated the TwoEvo suspension saga.

We got muddy at Kamfari, tested the 2021 YZ450F, Beta RR390, and compared Sherco and KTM 250 two-strokes. The Lawrence brothers were making waves in AMA Supercross. August was full of wins – David Walsh went back-to-back at Finke, Price won the Trophy Truck class, and Grabbo took the over-251cc two-stroke win and tested Tim Coleman's Sherco 300SE Factory.

We rode the CRF300 Rally and Harley-Davidson Pan America, shared our favourite WR450F maps, farewelled vintage guru Mark Firkin, and updated the KX450 long-termer. New models hit in October – CRF250R, Sherco 300SEF Factory, Husky TE300i and Rieju MR300 – and we went night riding at Kowen.

November marked Jett Lawrence's AMA 250 title, Sherco and Beta hard enduro testing, and Damien Koppe's King of the Beach win. The year wrapped with Jett's story, Antonio Cairoli's retirement, and Kyron Bacon making AORC noise.

2022

JANUARY KICKED off with us crowning the YZ250SP the two-stroke king, testing Josh Strang's GNCC KX450, and giving young Jax a run on the Sherco EB12 electric balance bike. We also lined up some last-minute gift ideas to leave in view of your other half. February saw the Husky FE501 prove itself a do-it-all machine, while we looked back at the KX450 long-termer, pitted the Sherco 300SEF against the Husky TE300i, and compared FMF and stock exhausts on the GASGAS EC350F. Meanwhile, Daniel Milner headed to Europe to join Fantic.

Mid-year we ran a Euro mid-capacity enduro shootout, tested the Sherco SE125, reviewed a modified KLX140L junior enduro, and caught up with Milner after his move to Europe. June brought a 240F enduro comparison, Chris Perry's Kosciuszko Killer win, and a GASGAS VIP experience. July featured WR250F maps, a chat with Jett Lawrence post-250 SX East title, a Sherco 500SEF Factory test at Finke, and a Beta RR350 vs RR350 Racing showdown.

October introduced the direct-injected KTM 250SX, tested the Sherco 125 SE Factory vs Beta RR200, Milner's XEF450, and Grabbo's Goldfields run on a stock EC250F. November brought a 300cc enduro face-off, a ride on Clout's CDR YZ450F, and AMA Pro MX results. December closed with a six-way hard enduro shootout, tests of Haruki Yokoyama's KX250 and the Aprilia Tuareg, Australia's third-place finish at the MXoN, and Kyron Bacon took the AORC crown.

THE SWEDISH WOLF WITH BITE BUT LITTLE BARK

We've seen battery bikes come and go, all with bright futures predicted, but the Stark Varg may just be the answer to a maidens prayer

WORDS // SIMON MAKKER PHOTOS // VARIOUS

THE AMERICAN ream

FRESH OFF DOMINATING THE MONSTER ENERGY AMA SUPERCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP, AUSTRALIAN BROTHERS JETT AND HUNTER LAWRENCE DESTROYED THE AMA PRO MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP IN 2023, SHATTERING ALL SORTS OF RECORDS IN THE PROCESS IN WHAT WAS AN ENTHRALLING SEASON OF RACING.

After decades without laying a finger on either the 450cc AMA supercross or motocross championship trophies, Team Honda HRC finally broke their hoodoo this year, as they claimed all five titles on offer. With the exception of the 450 supercross championship won by Chase Sexton, it was Aussie siblings, Hunter and Jett Lawrence who changed the face of the sport forever as they clinched both Monster Energy AMA Supercross 250 titles, then wrapped up both the 250 and 450 AMA Pro Motocross titles.

It's the first time that a manufacturer has won all five titles. It was also the first time that brothers had won two titles, let alone four, in the same year. 20-year-old Jett Lawrence became the first rookie to win the 450 Motocross Championship in his first campaign, and just the third rider ever (and the first rookie) to complete the outdoors season undefeated, with a perfect 22-race win streak.

What we witnessed outdoors this year was remarkable, especially when you consider the uphill battle Hunter (24) faced with injuries, and the big question-marks Jett faced about how he'd fare in the premier class. 2023 will be talked about as the year Australian riders dominated the American scene, and there's a good chance the two Sunshine Coast-born brothers are just getting started.

We caught up with them in the days after the final AMA Pro Motocross round at Ironman to find out what it was like behind the scenes.

Hunter won a total of 7 rounds

Jett took the 450cc crown with two rounds to go

Jett will race in the MX1 class at MXoN

68

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2023

JANUARY'S COVER story hailed the YZ450F as handling and hauling like a factory bike. Inside, we reported on Monza Imports' 40th birthday bash and how the Automobile and Motorcycle Association, a proposed MA alternative, had suspended operations after failing to secure insurance. Test bikes included the FC 350 Husky, Sherco 300 SE, Ducati DesertX, and Kyle Webster's HRC Honda CRF450R. We were impressed with the Husky FE 350, the KX450, Thumpstar TSN 250, and Tom Mason's EC250 GASGAS, which took him to the E3 win at the A4DE. We also covered Justin Brayton's fifth consecutive Australian SX title and Steve Gall's look back at *Mad Max: Fury Road* stunt work.

March told the story of Toby Price finishing second at Dakar by just 43 seconds, Sanders placing seventh. We tested the YZ250X, Sunday Motors S147/S187 mini flat trackers, and Husky's fuel-injected TC 250. The April cover featured the pink TM EN144 – no joke – alongside tests of the KX250, FE250, YCF F125SEL MX, and a retrospective on Steve Chapman's XR600R Safari bike. We also did a (somewhat) scientific rust penetrant test.

May brought a dyno showdown between KTM's 300 SX and 500 SX-F, a KLX110R L grown-up test, and reviews of the Mercedes Sprinter as a bike hauler, anti-theft devices, and a chat with Regan Duffy post-accident. Beta's RR300 Racing was called its best yet, the KLX300R impressed as a trailbike, we compared folding ramps, and covered a Gibb River Road ride gone wrong.

July was all about the Lawrence brothers taking two AMA SX titles – Hunter in 250 East and Jett in 250 West. We tested the TM EN300 FI ES, the Caofen F-80 electric bike, and wondered if the KLX230 S could be a beginner's ADV bike. The KTM EXC and Husky enduro range launches featured, Grabbo tested Taylah McCutcheon's Empire KX250, David Walsh claimed a fourth Finke, Jonte Reynders won the A4DE for Sherco, and Wil Ruprecht earned the Enduro World Championship.

September saw the Husky TE300 move from TPI to TBI and improve in every way. A Ducati DesertX qualified on Erzberg's front row, Mason Semmens won Hattah on his GASGAS, and we caught up with stunt rider Matt Coulter. October took Grabbo and Boydy to Italy for GASGAS and TM launches, examined WP suspension upgrades, and revealed Joel Smets' stolen bike had turned up in Australia.

In November, the Lawrence brothers completed their domination – Hunter added the 250 Pro MX title, Jett the 450 crown. We tested the Beta X-Trainer, KX112, and Sinje Gottwald's electric Africa crossing. December closed with tests of the YZ450F, KTM 250EXC, a fully tricked GASGAS EC250F and the Kawasaki Elektrode. Australia placed second at the MXoN, New Zealand 14th, Josh Green took the AORC title, and Ruben Chadwick topped the AHEC.

2024

WE KICKED off the year by testing emerging models like the Kove 450 Rally and Royal Enfield Himalayan 450. Honda teased an electric motocross prototype, and we attended the Beta enduro range launch. Due to financial constraints, only one Aussie team went to the ISDE – the women's squad bagged second in the World Trophy. We went night riding at Kowen and looked at Canada's Numb Bum ice race.

February saw the Triumph TF 250-X debut, we rode Sanders' GASGAS 450 Rally, dyno tested the YZ450F, and covered both the Australian and World SX Championships. Tom Drane was turning heads in US flat track, and we put the GASGAS EC300, 450F and 500F head-to-head. We also tested the Beta RR480 and Honda CRF110F.

By April, we'd crowned the Sherco 300 SEF Factory the king of mid-capacity enduros, exposed Ducati's Desmo450 MX, tested the CFMOTO CX-2E electric kid's bike and got Dakar insights from Price (5th) and Sanders (8th). We rode the Triumph TF 250-X, explained mousse tubes, kicked off the VIP Experience, and examined BDH's bent Berg FE570 with TwoEvo forks.

Tragedy struck in May with the death of Jayden Archer during a triple backflip attempt. We profiled Jake Bennett and Mel Eckert's pillion jump record and got rally bike setup tips from Lyndon Poskitt. Jett Lawrence was July's cover star after winning the AMA 450 SX title in his rookie season. We tested the Beta 300 Racing, GASGAS MC250, Husky TE250 and looked into air vests.

In August, David Walsh claimed his fifth consecutive Finke win, and we pitted Sherco 300s – two-stroke vs four-stroke – against each other. We also joined the VIP Experience at Sanders' private track. September took us to France for the Sherco launch, compared the Stark Varg to a CR500, busted Rieju myths and reported on seven Aussies who took on Erzberg.

October featured Australia's fastest 250s – Burchell's YZ250F, Connelly's CRF250R and Minear's KTM 250 SX-F – along with AHEC carnage, Aussie legends racing abroad, and the Suzuki V-Strom 800DE value proposition.

November's cover showcased KTM's Special Edition models. Inside, we tested the CRF250R, Sherco 300SE, Tenere 700, GASGAS MC85, Beta RR250 and a restored Kawasaki Splitfire KX250. We also compared the GYTR hydraulic clutch to standard cable setup. We closed the year with Australia's Motocross of Nations win thanks to the Hunter brothers and Kyle Webster, ran an 800–900cc ADV shootout, and celebrated Daniel Milner's AORC crown.

RACE REPORT | 2024 FINKE DESERT RACE

FINKE! REBOOTED

THE TATTS FINKE DESERT RACE REVS TO THE TUNE OF A DAVID WALSH HIGH FIVE

2025

THAT JUST about brings us to the present. And if you've read this far and been paying attention, you won't need us to tell you what's happened this year — your bookshelf should already be groaning under the weight of each issue. If not, have a word with our back issues department. Fifty years is a bloody impressive milestone for any magazine, and I'd like to think GE is sitting back with a beer and some cabanossi — probably sharing it with Grunt, Firko and a few other legends — nodding in quiet approval. LONG LIVE ADB!

Got something to say about this yarn?
Let us know at adbmag@adbmag.com.au

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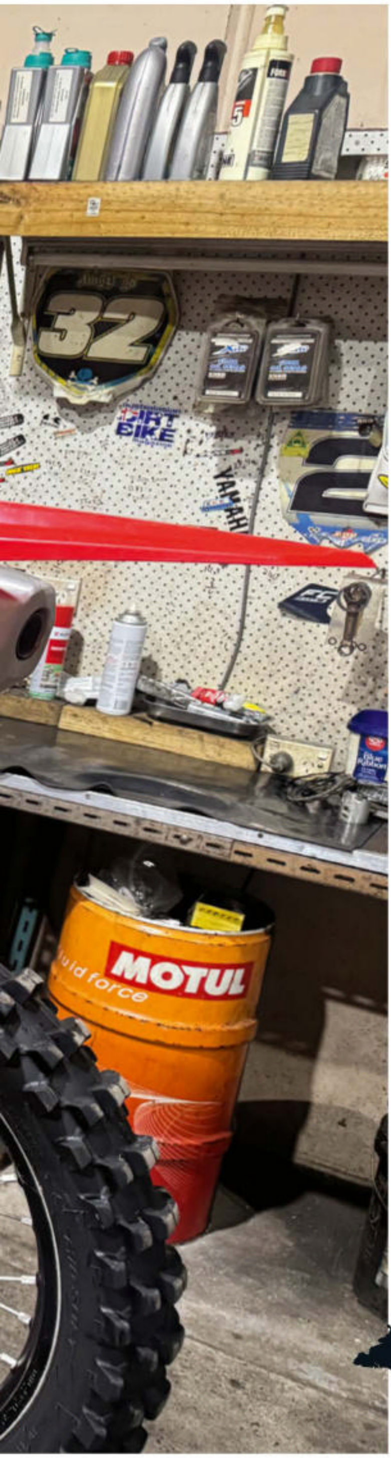


WE ALREADY had a GET ECU fitted to the Honda and have been really happy with the results but we still decided to give the GET Second Injector Kit a go to see how much difference it makes to the little CRF250R.

While the Kawasaki KX250 comes standard with a dual injection system that works really well and gives it a strong top-end, and GET makes a popular second injector kit for the KTM 250 SX-F that I have plenty of experience with, I haven't been asked to fit a second injector kit to a Honda CRF250R before.

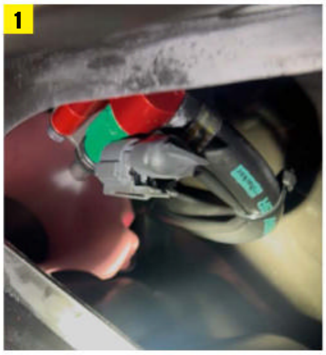
The GET Second Injector Kit is designed to fit the 2024 CRF but as the air boxes are a similar shape it is easy to fit to the MY25 CRF. You start by drilling holes and fixing the injector and bracket to the top of the air box. Then you drill holes in the front of the air box and run the extra fuel hose and cables through sealing plugs in the front of the air box. Then, once the air box is all sealed up, the wiring plugs into the ECU and the fuel hose to the second injector has to be spliced into the main fuel line using a T-piece.

Once the second injector kit is fitted a map that runs the second injector needs to be uploaded into the ECU. First up, I loaded in the 2024 model second injector map straight from GET which works well on the 2025 CRF250R, but instead of sticking with that I spent hours on the dyno fine tuning the mapping to better suit the 2025 model. One thing the '25 model needs over the '24 model is much more timing low in the rev range. The fuelling is very good but I did add a touch more fuel high in the rev range. While the bottom-end is not significantly improved over the GET ECU without the second injector, the top-end gains another horsepower.

On the track the second injector gives the Honda an extra burst of power as the engine revs up; it actually feels very much like a power band. The power gets better the more the engine revs. It's going to be great to spend some more time with this setup and get more comfortable with it.

Mat Boyd

1



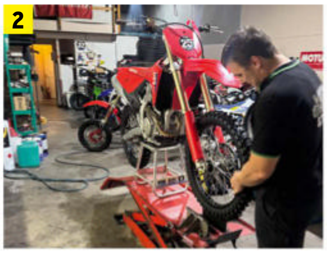
> ***I spent hours on the dyno fine tuning the mapping to better suit the 2025 model***

MY25 HONDA CRF250R
RRP
$13,799
WARRANTY
NA
DISTRIBUTOR
Honda Australia
INTERNET
motorcycles.honda.com.au

SO FAR
TOTAL HOURS
10
MODS THIS MONTH
GET Second Injector Kit

1. Boydy reckons the second injector is good when the engine revs up giving it an extra burst of power
2. Boydy fitted a fresh set of rubber
3. No dual pipe, just dual injector

2



3

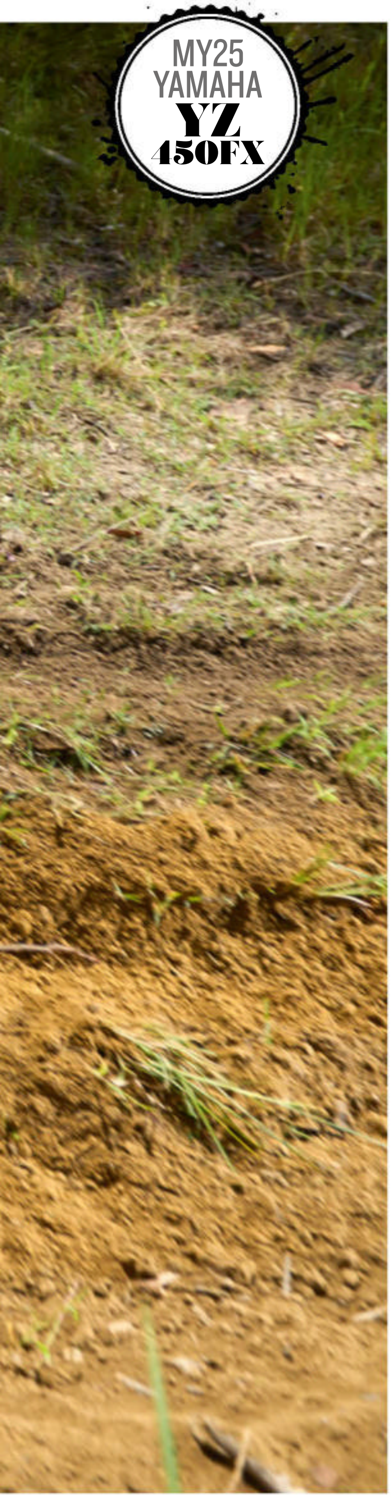
XTREAD PERFORMANCE TYRES
/ PRICE
/ PERFORMANCE
/ VALUE!
$94.95
$74.95
Available In 21" and 18"
Rear Tyre Reversible
A4DE Outright Test Winner
MXE-24
80/100/21 & 110/100-18
SOLD EXCLUSIVELY MX STORE .COM.AU

GOOD GEAR

A SMALL GEARING CHANGE MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE TO THE YX450FX

XTREAD
PERFORMANCE TYRES
/ PRICE
/ PERFORMANCE
/ VALUE!
$94.95
$74.95
Available In 21" and 18"
Rear Tyre Reversible
A4DE Outright Test Winner
MXE-24
80/100/21 & 110/100-18
SOLD EXCLUSIVELY MXSTORE.COM.AU

MY25 YAMAHA YZ 450FX



AFTER LAST months toe-dip into hard enduro on the YZ450FX, it was time to get out and about amongst the trees and give the beast a proper ride. I still get blown away by just how fast this bike is every time I ride it. It is a lot of fun and I wish I was fit enough to enjoy it to its full potential.

I finally made an adjustment to the bike that I have been wanting to try for a while now and that is to change the gearing from 13/50 to 13/52. Not a huge difference, I know, but it is a necessary one. The gap between second and third gears on the 450FX is huge and it's actually a giant pain in the butt. Second is too revvy and third is too tall, so you constantly find yourself either revving the engine too much and wheel spinning, or lugging it along and bogging down. So, in theory, making the gearing lower should allow me to use third gear more often.

Thanks to the guys from Two Wheel Obsession in Gosford, I was able to sneak past there on my way home from work and grab a 52T rear sprocket and be on my way. I headed to a fun test track we have on the Central Coast and man, it may be a small change, but damn what a difference it makes. The bike is more manageable in third gear and the suspension seems to be more rider-friendly as well, which is always a good thing. Having the ability to use third gear easily gives the bike a more settled feel so I was pretty happy with the change.

1

I think you could fiddle around a bit more with the gearing on this bike, maybe even go to a 53 to bring that third even lower. It's a bit of a bummer that the gap between the two gears is so great because, other than that, I have almost nothing to complain about with this bike. Everything else works so well and there is never a shortage of smiles when riding the big powered YZ450FX.

I love this bike on fast and flowing tracks. The power is epic, as is the suspension, and it really is a super fun bike to ride. I can't help but wonder just how good a Yamaha YZ350FX would be. Can you imagine?! We can dream, that's for sure.

Geoff Braico

It may be a small change, but damn what a difference it makes

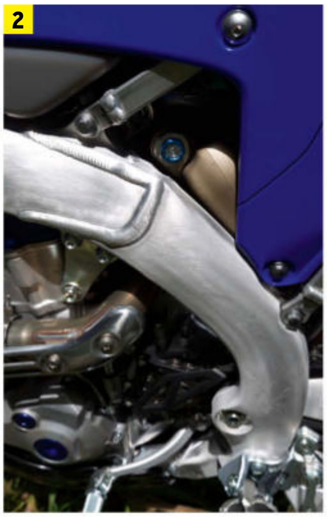
MY25 YAMAHA YZ450FX

RRP
$15,949
WARRANTY
NA
DISTRIBUTOR
Yamaha Australia
INTERNET
www.yamaha-motor.com.au

SO FAR

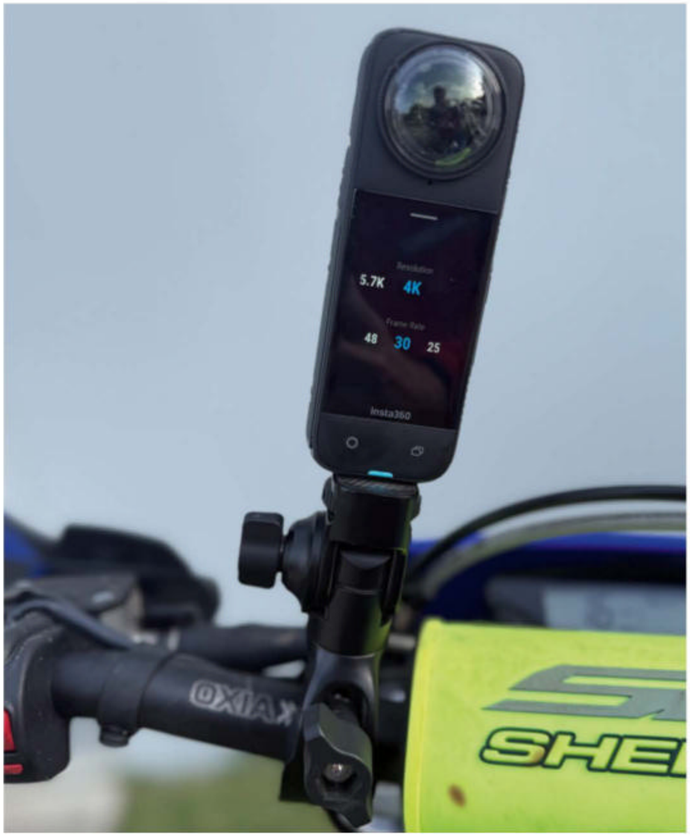
TOTAL HOURS
24 hours
MODS THIS MONTH
Gearing change
from 13/50 to 13/52
MODS NEXT MONTH
None

1. The old 50T rear sprocket that comes with the YZ450FX was too tall so Braico swapped it out for a bigger one
2. The frame makes the bike feel rigid but that's good for racing

2


INSTA360 X4 CAMERA

Used & Abused



AFTER MONTHS of real-world riding, filming, crashing, and replaying every sketchy moment in glorious slow motion, the Insta360 X4 has earned its spot in *We Recommend*. With 8K 360° video, 5.7K60fps slow-mo, and a genuinely clever AI editing system, the X4 isn't just a camera–it's your personal media team in a compact, slightly top-heavy package. From trail riding to motocross, this thing captures everything and then some.

WE LIKED ▲

PICTURE QUALITY This is phenomenal–sharp, vibrant, and stable, whether filming in 8K 360, 4K60 Single-Lens Mode, or slow motion.

SHOOTING ANGLES The 360° recording feature means you never miss the action–look left, right, behind, above... it's all there, and you can choose the angle after you ride.

EDITING AI-powered editing in the Insta360 app is a massive time-saver. It automatically pulls out the best angles and action, thanks to smart tracking and motion detection, so you don't spend hours manually reframing footage.

PLAYBACK The 2.5-inch Gorilla Glass touchscreen is bright and responsive, making menu navigation easy even mid-ride or with gloves.

SMOOTH FlowState Stabilization and 360° Horizon Lock work flawlessly–footage stays buttery smooth even over rocks, roots, and ruts.

BATTERY Battery life is excellent, pushing out up to 135 minutes of recording. We don't record the entire time we ride so we never run out of power on a full day trailride.

DESPITE A FEW KNOCKS, the unit held up well. The durable casing helped keep things intact (though not perfect, see below).

WE DIDN'T LIKE ▼

WEIGHT It's top-heavy, especially when mounted on handlebars or helmets, which means it can come loose and tilt if not locked down firmly.

LENS The bulbous lens caps stick out a long way from the body, making them prone to scratching like ours did when the bike slid down a rock face.

FILE SIZES File sizes are enormous–no surprise when shooting in 8K, but be ready with serious storage if you're filming a lot. Exporting and processing the clips also takes longer because there's just so much data packed in.

VERDICT

The Insta360 X4 is a standout tool for dirtbike riders, content creators, or anyone who wants to film once and figure out the angles later. It's packed with technical firepower–8K video, 135-minute battery, AI reframing, and rock-solid stabilization–all in one package. Yes, it's a bit chunky, and the lenses demand protection, but the footage you get is unbeatable. If you're serious about capturing every wheelie, crash, and pass from every angle, the X4 is still the best 360 camera you can throw on a bike.

Mitch Lees

GET IT HERE

Insta360 Official Store,
Amazon, selected retailers
BILL
$747.99
BROWSER
store.insta360.com

Just Landed

100% ARMEGA SP24 GOGGLE

THE ARMEGA SP24 goggle might be one of the most premium dirt goggles out there. I've spent the last few months flogging this pair through a variety of moto conditions, and I can confirm they're comfy, well-ventilated and rock solid on the helmet. The 48mm ultra-wide strap with silicone bead keeps them glued in place, even during the roughest rides. There's no mid-moto slipping or adjusting, just set and forget.

The outrigger system is the real standout for me. It holds the strap off the frame and lets the goggle sit flush and snug on your face without distorting or lifting the lens seal. Honestly, every goggle should be doing this by now – it's that good. The field of vision is excellent, both wide and tall, and the Ultra HD lens clarity lives up to the hype, giving you a sharp, contrast-rich view of the terrain. The triple-layer face foam wicks sweat like a sponge and, paired with force air intake ports, helps keep fog at bay.

Now, for the downsides. The removable nose guard, while a great idea for roost deflection, sits a bit tight on my nose – not enough to make it unwearable, but noticeable after a few laps. And then there's the price. It's up there, no doubt, but you are getting a shatter-resistant, 2mm injection-moulded lens, a quick-change system and enough structure to survive the chaos of a race day. So, while it stings the wallet, you're definitely getting quality and performance in return. Stay tuned as we continue testing.

Mitch Lees

GET IT HERE

serco.com.au
BILL
$149.95
BROWSER
serco.com.au

SHOT LITE CHALLENGER HELMET

Just Landed

FOR A HELMET that slides in well below the four-figure mark, the Shot Lite is punching way above its weight in the safety game. With ECE 22.06 certification, a fibreglass shell, MIPS and D3O impact protection all packed into a 1250g lid, this thing reads more like a spec sheet from a premium helmet twice the price. Throw in a shock-absorbing chin bar, self-breaking peak screws for rotational energy distribution and a hydration tube hook, and it's clear Shot has come to play in the big leagues.

In practice, the Lite really delivers on comfort and tech. The padding is soft, plush and hypoallergenic, and the airflow through the 10 intake and nine exhaust vents is noticeable – especially when you're valve-bouncing in the trees. It feels light on your head, although I did find the cheek area a little tight and the neck opening is narrow, making getting it off more of a job than it should be. It also sits a touch higher on the head than I'd like, likely due to a shallow fit. I wear a large in most helmets, but if you're on the border, you might want to size up.

Still, for the price, this helmet is seriously good value. The MIPS and D3O combo, along with the quick-release cheek pads, removable liner and adjustable peak, make this a helmet that's ready for both race day and trail duty. Minor fit quirks aside, it's one of the most safety-packed lids in its class… and it looks sharp too. Sit tight as we continue testing, especially the removable cheek pads which we've had some issues on another model in the past.

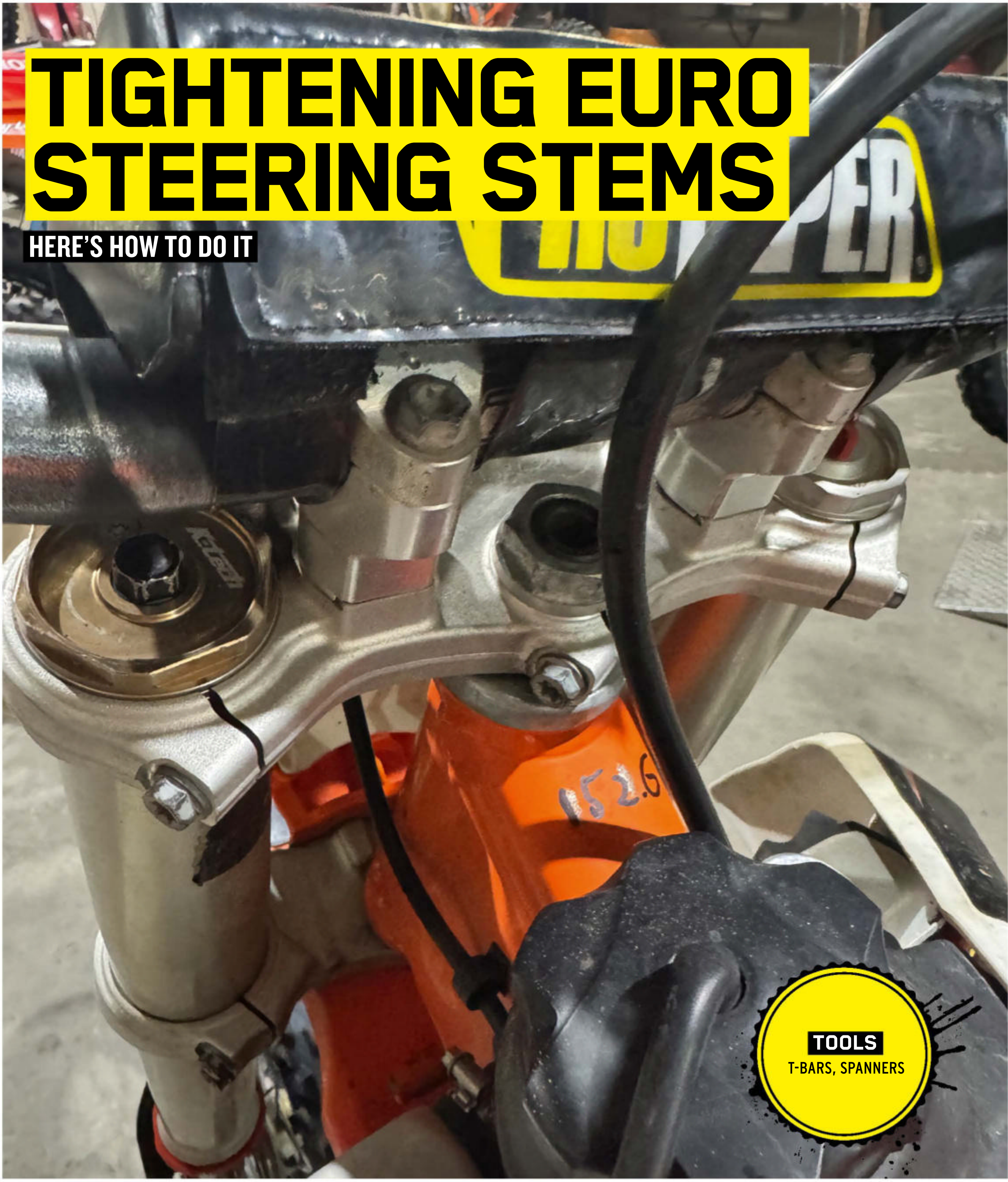
Mitch Lees

GET IT HERE

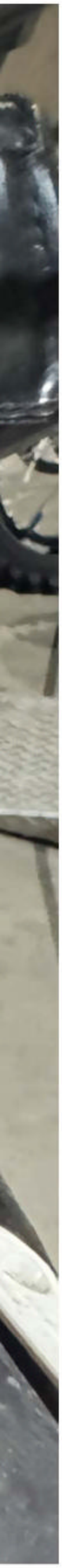
www.linkint.com.au
BILL
$449
BROWSER
www.linkint.com.au

TIGHTENING EURO STEERING STEMS

HERE'S HOW TO DO IT



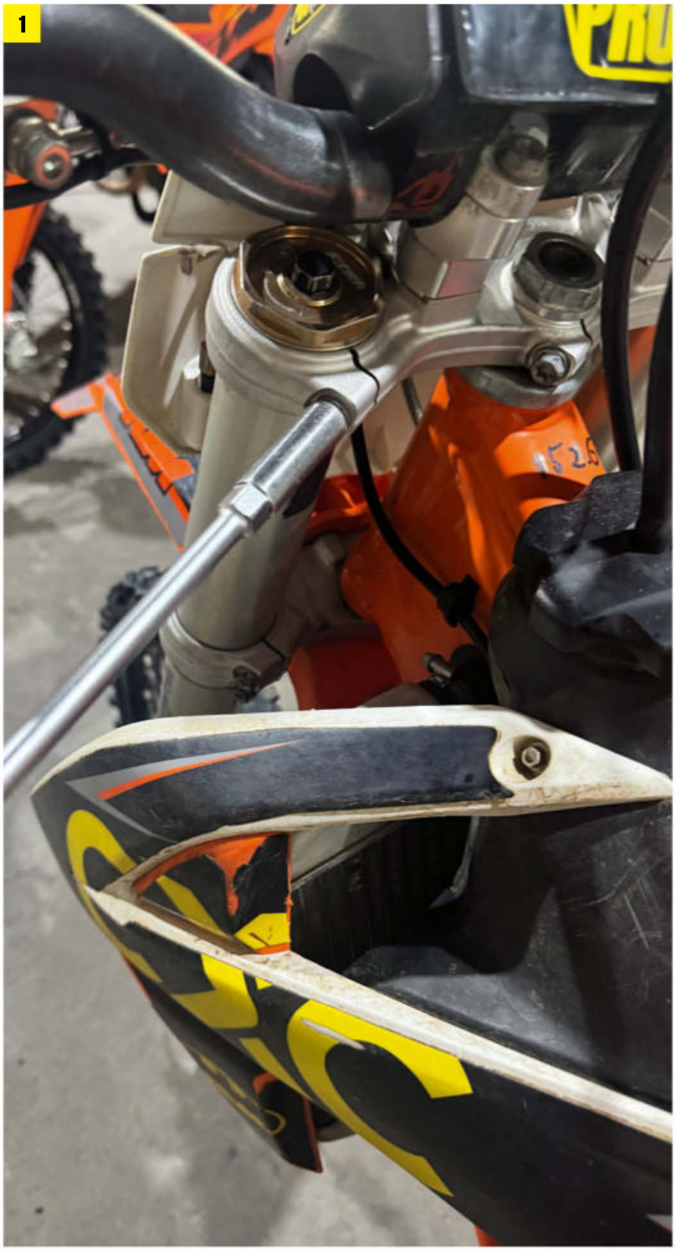
TOOLS
T-BARS, SPANNERS



OCCASIONALLY European motorcycle manufacturers like to do things slightly different than the Japanese manufacturers and in this case it is how the steering stem is tightened. The Euros use a pinch bolt in the top triple clamp but the Japanese use two separate nuts either side of the top triple clamp that lock into place. Here we will explain how to adjust the tension on a Euro steering stem.

#1 STAND 'ER UP

Start by placing the motorcycle on a centrestand with the front wheel off the ground. It is easiest to feel the tension on the bearings with the wheel off the ground compared to with the wheel in contact with the ground.



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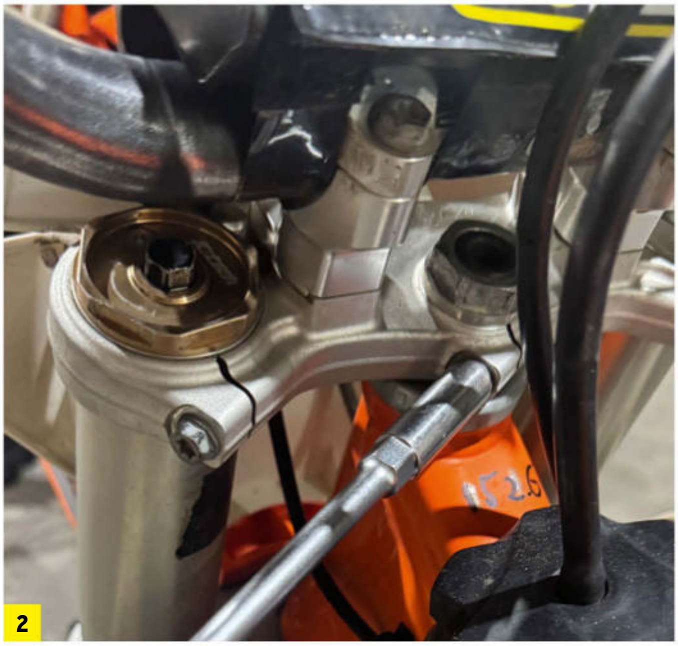
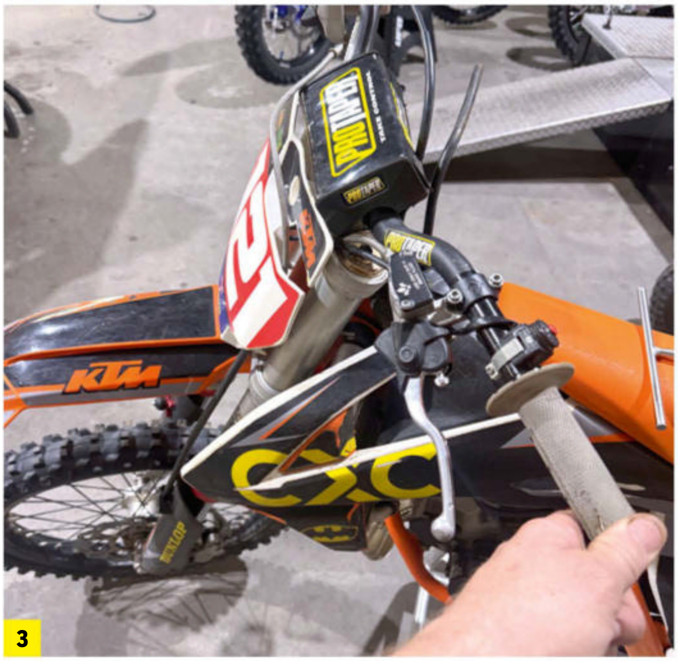


2

#2 LOOSEN UP

Now that the wheel is off the ground loosen all the fork pinch bolts. There will be two in the top triple clamp holding the right fork leg and another two holding the left fork leg. Do not loosen the triple clamp pinch bolts in the lower triple clamp or the fork legs may fall out on the ground.



3

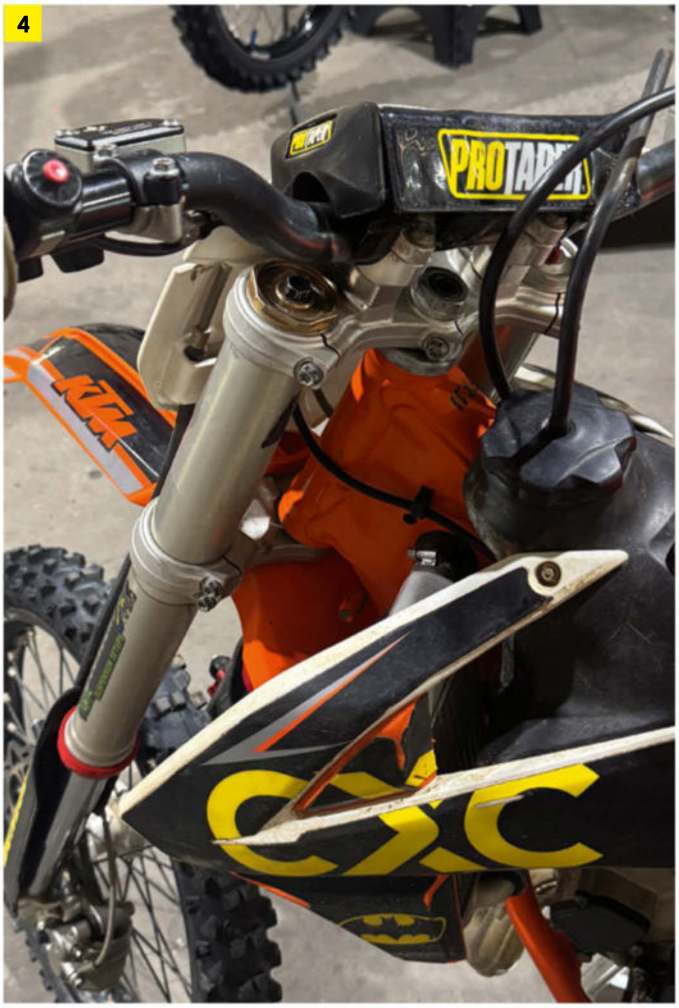
#3 LOOSEN SOME MORE

Now loosen the pinch bolt in the top triple clamp that clamps the steering stem. It is not necessary to remove any of these bolts, they only need to be loosened so they release their tension.

#4 TENSION THE NUT

Take your spanner and adjust the top nut on the top triple clamp that threads into the steering stem. If you want the steering to be tighter then add tension to the nut, if you want the steering to be looser then remove tension from the nut.

4



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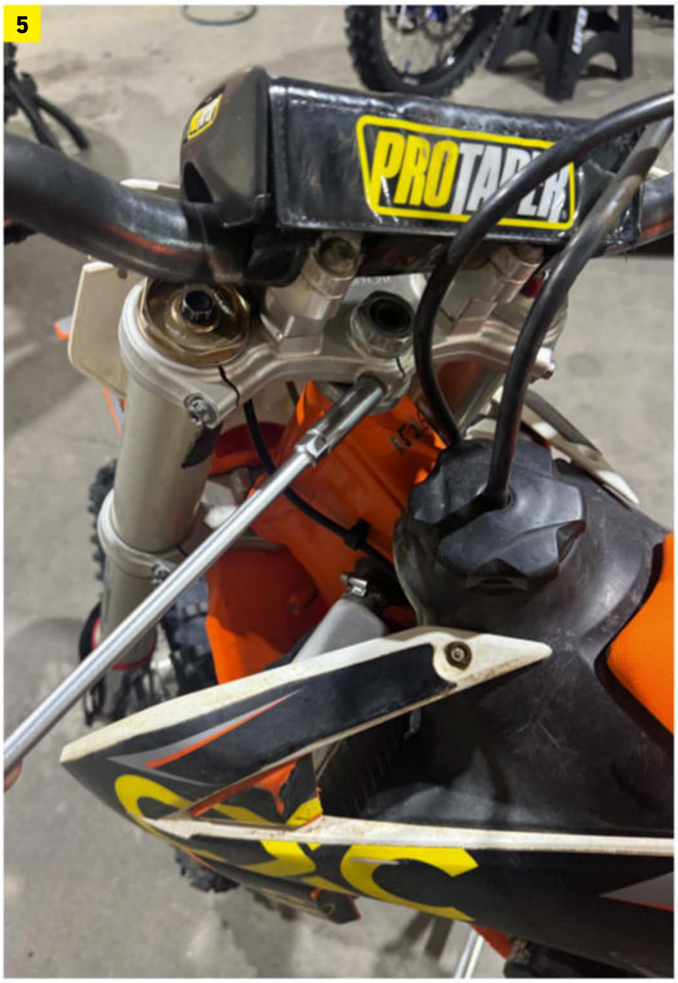


#5 PINCH IT UP

Once you have the desired tension set on the steering bearings, tighten the pinch bolt that clamps the steering stem to the manufacturers torque specifications. Each manufacturer can be different and some will even mark the torque setting on the triple clamp next to the nut and bolts.

LOOSE OR TIGHT?

A TIGHTER steering stem will make the bike harder to ride at slow speeds as it takes more effort to balance and steer the bike around tight corners, but it will be more stable at higher speeds, especially in rough conditions.

A looser steering stem makes balancing at lower speeds easier, it also makes tight turns easier, but can lead to head shake and instability on rough terrain or at high speeds.

#6 TORQUE RIGHT

Then it is time to re-tension the fork pinch bolts. Be sure to tighten them to the manufacturers torque specifications as over tightening them can cause damage to the triple clamps and fork tubes as they will not move correctly.

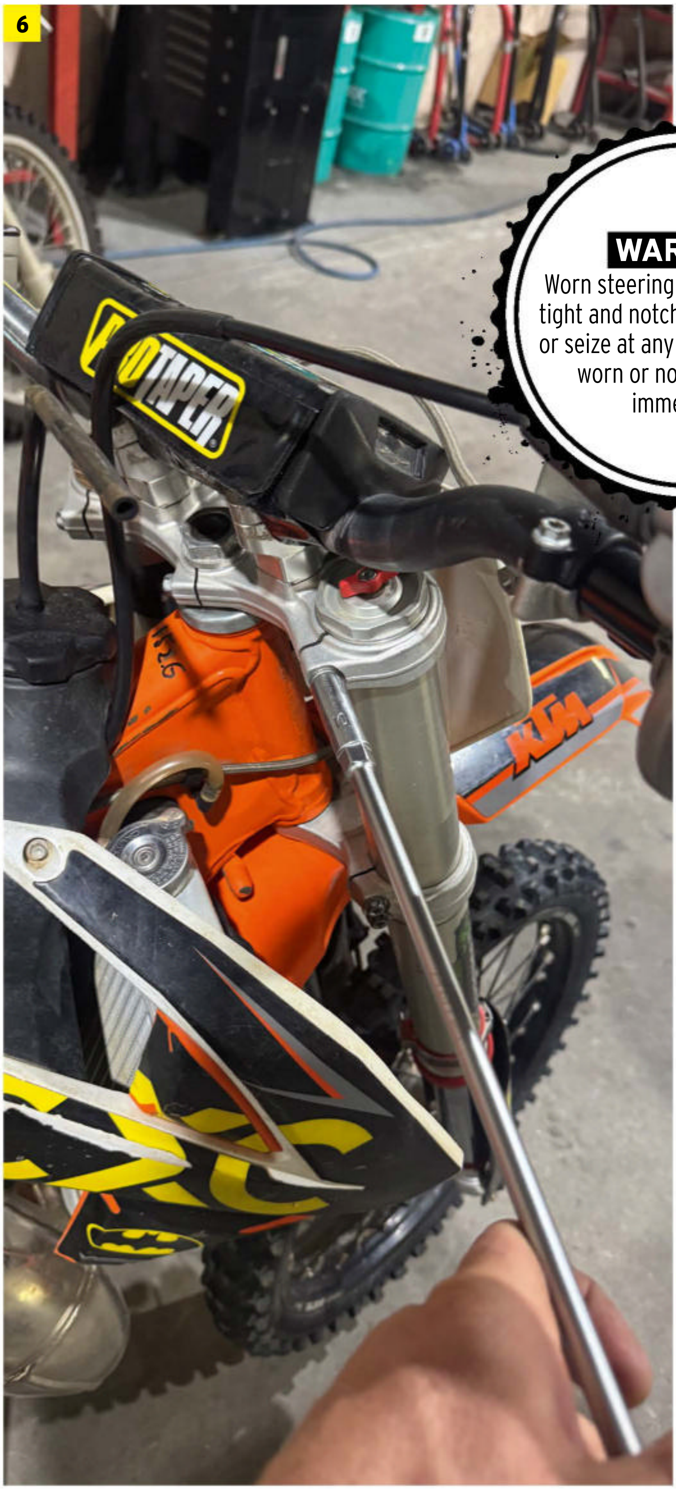
DOS

- Always follow the manufacturer's torque settings.
- Check for any free play in the bearings before riding.
- Check the steering will turn full lock both ways before riding.

DON'TS

- Over tighten any bolts or nuts.
- Lock up the bearings so tight that you cannot steer.
- Loosen the steering nut so there is play in the bearings.

6



WARNING

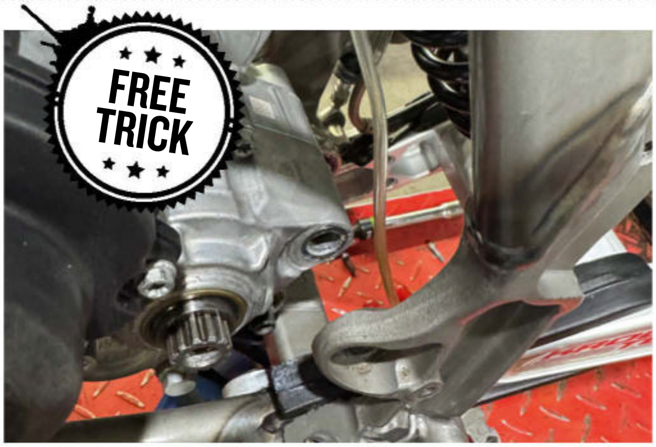
Worn steering bearings will feel tight and notchy and can lock up or seize at any time. Replace any worn or notchy bearings immediately.

PROTAPER
1526

7

#7 FEEL IT

Before removing the bike from the centrestand, turn the handlebars each way to make sure nothing is binding and check for play in the bearings to make sure you haven't set the tension on the steering bearings too loose.



ENGINE FITMENT

TROUBLE ✗

Trying to slide an engine in between the swingarm and pivots while lining up the engine can be rather difficult.

TRICK ✓

Slide the swingarm back out of the way so you have more room to fit the engine into the frame. Then once you have loosely fitted the engine mounts you can go ahead and refit the swingarm and pivot bolt.

DIFFICULTY:
★

TIME:
1 MINUTE

COST:
$0

TOOLS:
ELBOW GREASE

CARB LOCATOR

TROUBLE ✗

You have had your carb or throttle body out and can't seem to get it to fit back into place correctly.

TRICK ✓

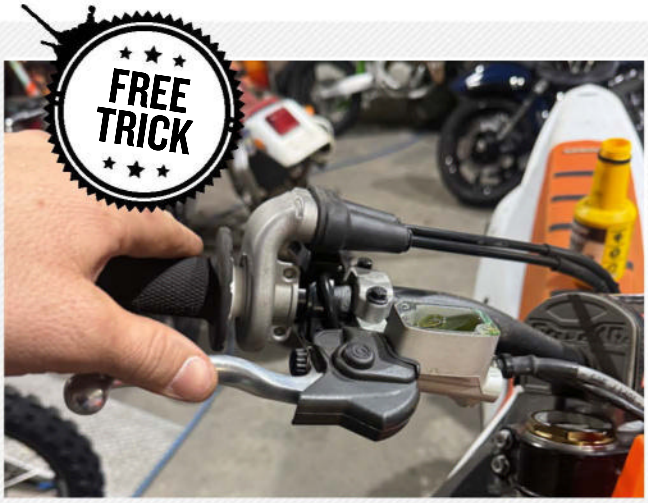
Carbs and throttle bodies are fitted with a locating pin that must line up with the rubber manifold to fit properly. Make sure these locaters are lined up correctly before tightening the fixing clamps.

DIFFICULTY:
★

TIME:
1 MINUTE

COST:
$0

TOOLS:
SCREW DRIVER



BLEED TROUBLES

TROUBLE ✗

You have bled your front brake system over and over again but still the brakes are spongy and don't seem to be getting better.

TRICK ✓

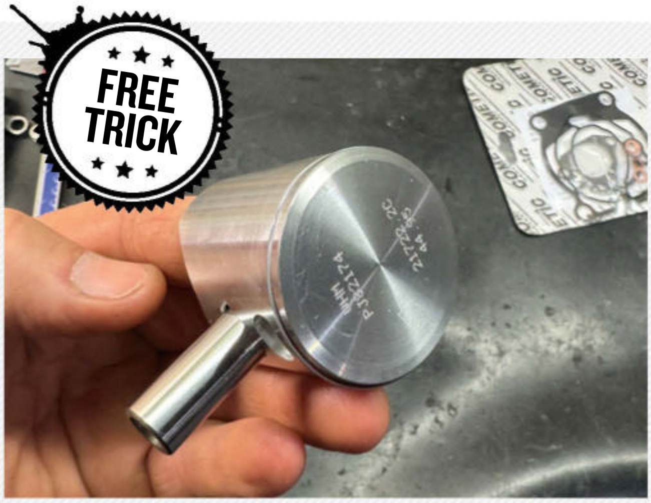
Turn the handlebar so the master cylinder is higher than the brake line. Then give the brake lever a few quick flicks and if there is any air trapped in the banjo bolt or master cylinder then it will come back out through the master cylinder.

DIFFICULTY
★★

TIME:
1 MINUTE

COST:
$0

TOOLS:
BRAKE FLUID



PISTON PIN

TROUBLE ✗

You have just quickly stuck one of the piston circlips in your piston and now you are trying to fiddle around and fit the piston and circlip with the power valve in the way.

TRICK ✓

Always check which side of the engine your power valve is on. Then fit the piston pin so that you are fitting the circlip on the opposite side to the power valve; this will give you plenty of room to get the circlip in without the power valve getting in the way.

DIFFICULTY
★

TIME:
1 MINUTE

COST:
$0

TOOLS:
PISTON CIRCLIP

BRAKE LINES
BRAKE SHOES
DISCS
CLUTCHES
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australasian DIRT BIKE

KIDZ RIDE

LPR16 V4 MX KIDS E-BIKE

ENHANCED PERFORMANCE AND COMFORT

THE LPR16 V4 MX Kids E-Bike has undergone significant upgrades, including a longer rear shock that offers 80mm travel compared to the previous V3 model's 50mm, delivering a smoother ride over bumps and rough terrain.

This alloy-frame electric bike for kids is equipped with front and rear suspension, a powerful 7Ah 36V battery, hydraulic disc brakes and tapered alloy handlebar for better control and handling.

With near-silent operation, the LPR16 V4 MX e-bike allows your child to ride quietly in the backyard or local trails without disturbing others, unlike noisy petrol-powered dirtbikes. Weighing only 15kg, this lightweight kids electric bike is easy for young riders to handle, allowing them to manoeuvre through tight spaces with ease, just like a regular bicycle.

Parents can also customise the speed settings using a simple speed limiter knob, enabling you to start your child off at lower speeds and gradually increase them as their skills improve.

The brushless DC motor located in the rear wheel provides a smooth and quiet ride, while the absence of a traditional drive chain eliminates a potential safety hazard. The bike features hydraulic disc brakes with short-throw levers perfectly designed for smaller hands and offering easy braking control.

The 6061 aluminium frame, paired with 36-spoke alloy wheels, quick-adjust seat height, rugged off-road knobby tiyes and upgraded suspension make this kids e-bike not only functional but also stylish and unique. It's the perfect choice for young adventurers.

- **Top speed 36km/h**
- **15kg total weight**
- **Maximum rider weight 50kg**
- **Maximum rider height 140 cm**
- **Some assembly required**
- **240v charger included - AU plug**

The Electric LPR16 V4 is available in White, Lilac and Teal

RRP: $1749.00

WEBSITE: www.lprbikes.com

WE SAY: Indi Hooper: My brother and I both have LPR16's. They are such a great little bike for getting around the pits, around the neighbourhood and just having fun. Great quality, awesome to ride and last forever! We have one of the earlier versions, and both are still going strong after being ridden for years. I highly recommend this bike. You won't be disappointed.

THE NOISE, THE THRILL, THE ATMOSPHERE

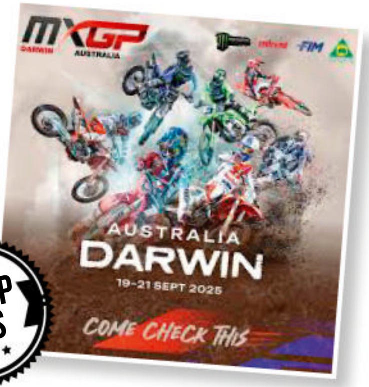
THIS SEPTEMBER, Darwin will roar into life as MXGP rips it up Down Under for the first time in nearly 25 years.

From 19-21 September 2025, the world's greatest riders, teams and bikes will descend on the Top End of Australia to put on one of the greatest shows on the motorsport calendar Down Under: the MXGP of Australia.

The event, hosted by the Northern Territory Major Events Company, will take place on a purpose-built track at Hidden Valley Motorsports Complex in Darwin and be broadcast to more than 100 countries. The soon-to-be-built custom-designed track promises exceptional spectator areas to watch the world's top motocross riders.

Australian riders will be competing in all three international classes: MXGP, MX2 and WMX.

In addition to those who make it to the world championship there will be wildcard rider entries selected by Motorcycling Australia (up to 10 in each class).



MXGP AUS

National supporting classes include MX3 and MX85.

EVENT FORMAT

DAY 1 - FRIDAY 19 SEPTEMBER

Friday kicks off the weekend with a thrilling start as the riders get a feel for the track during Free and Timed Practice sessions across the yet to be announced Australian support classes. The day wraps up with vital Start Practices for MXGP, MX2 and WMX, giving fans an early look at some of the weekend's biggest stars in action out on the track.

DAY 2 - SATURDAY 20 SEPTEMBER

Saturday is a jam-packed day full of racing, starting with final races in the Australian MX categories before moving into the international spotlight. The WMX, MX2 and MXGP classes take to the track for Free and Time Practice sessions, building up to the thrilling Qualifying Races later in the day, setting the stage for Sunday's main events.

DAY 3 - SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

Sunday is the pinnacle of the weekend, offering non-stop racing action that will have fans on the edge of their seats. The day starts with warm-up laps before the championship heats begin. Watch as the WMX riders battle it out in their final race, followed by the highly anticipated MX2 and MXGP races, each delivering two intense rounds of action-packed competition. With 30 minutes plus two laps per race, Sunday will determine who stands on top of the podium at this unforgettable event in Darwin.

For tickets go to www.ticketek.com.au

KIDZ GEAR

LITTLE PRO RIDER
LPR

LITTLE PRO RIDER MERCH

IF YOU ARE lucky enough to have an LPR electric bike, you would probably have some LPR merch hanging in your wardrobe too!

If not, check out the latest LPR LPR16 V4 on this page and once you convince Mum and/or Dad to buy you one, you need the latest merch to go with your new bike. Check out the custom gloves, hoodies, tees and custom bike stands on the website.

RRP: **LPR Gloves (youth sizes XS-L)- $39.99**
Rock On Hand Black Hoodie (sizes: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14) - $55
LPR 16-inch Bike Stand - $129

WEBSITE: **www.lprbikes.com**

KIDZ NEWS

NITRO CIRCUS IS COMING TO OZ!

CREATED BY Travis Pastrana, the Nitro Circus Off the Rails World Tour kicks off in Australia from October 2025, debuting a 360 Stadium Show with a 15m Giganta ramp, cutting-edge FMX kickers and immersive effects.

Tickets available from
www.ticketek.com.au

2025 TOUR DATES
11 October, Adelaide, SA
1 November, Gold Coast, QLD
15 November, Parramatta NSW

NITRO CIRCUS
OFF THE RAILS
WORLD TOUR
AUSTRALIA TOUR KICKS OFF
OCTOBER 2025

KIDZ LONG TERM TEST BIKE

RAINED OUT!

YCF 16- & 12-INCH

IF YOU'VE BEEN LIVING on the East Coast last month, you'll know there's only one real update worth making: rain. So much rain. Our usual commute to kindy and school was swapped for soggy car rides, and our big plan to take the kids to Wylde Mountain Bike Park to ride their YCFs was a washout—literally. We got there, took one look at the puddles, and called it. Bonnie was gutted, and to be honest, so were we.

So with the riding on pause, we decided to give both the YCF 12-inch and 16-inch balance bikes a bit of TLC. Being electric, there's not a heap of maintenance to do, but a few tweaks go a long way. We tightened the chains, gave the brake winders a quick adjust, pumped up the tyres, and gave both bikes a much-needed wash after their muddy pre-rain stints. Nothing major.

One small hiccup did pop up though—Bonnie's grip fell off mid-ride. She noticed it and let us know straight away, which is a good reminder to check the grips regularly. Instead of wrapping it with lock wire (which could hurt her little hands), I went with the tried-and-true super glue fix. It's held firm since.

Despite barely riding, the bikes are both still in great shape and ready for action as soon as the sun shows its face again. Hopefully next month includes less waterproof jackets and more wheelies. For now, at least the gear's clean, the grips are glued, and the kids are itching to twist the throttle again.

Mitch Lees

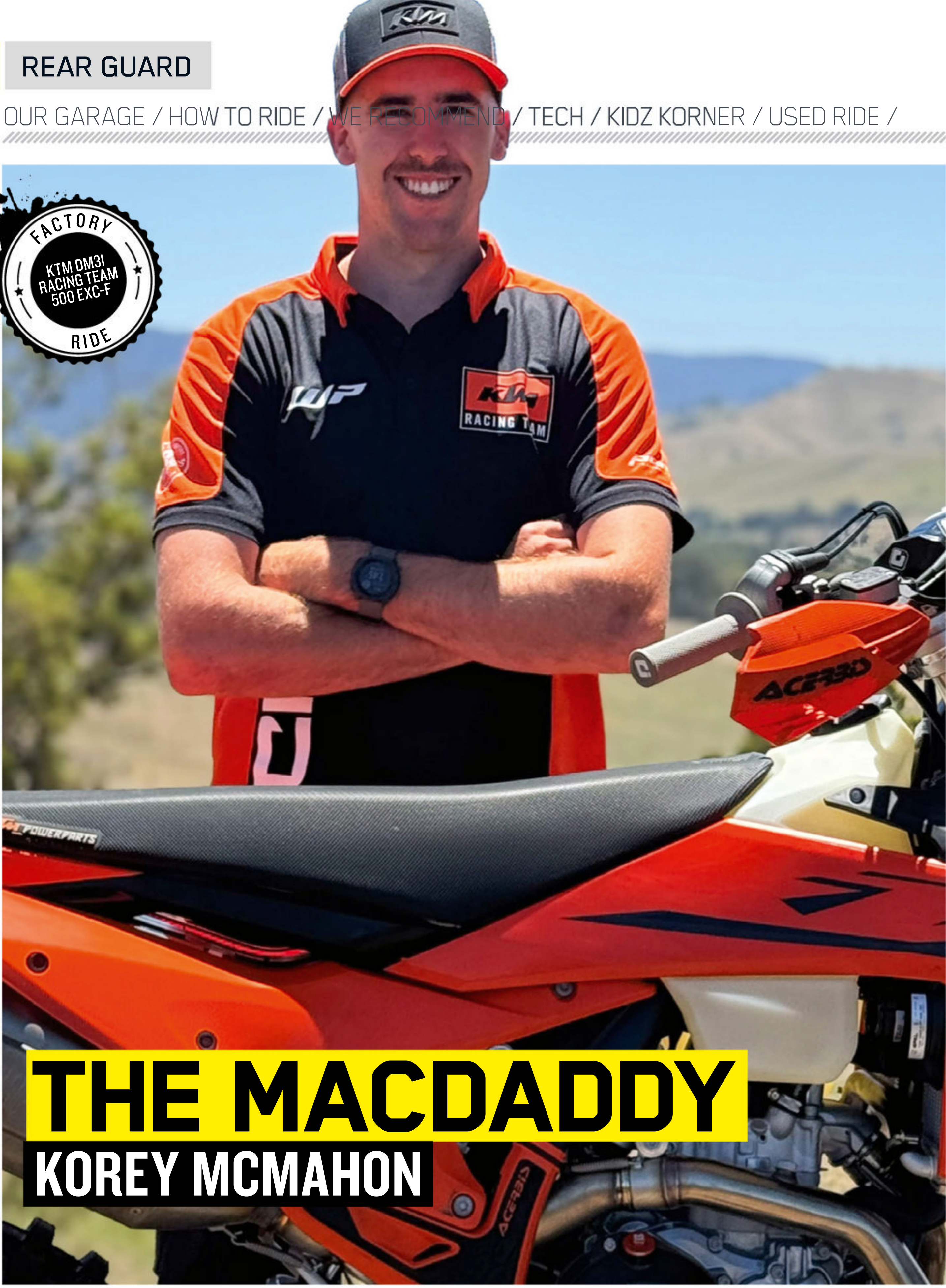
YCF 12- & 16-INCH

RRP
$799 & $999
WARRANTY
None
DISTRIBUTOR
YCF Australia
INTERNET
ycf-riding.com.au

SO FAR

TOTAL HOURS
34 hours
MODS THIS MONTH
None
MODS NEXT MONTH
None

FACTORY
KTM DM31 RACING TEAM 500 EXC-F
RIDE



THE MACDADDY

KOREY MCMAHON

DM31
RACING
KTM

THE TITLE-WINNING KTM DM31 Racing Team of Daniel Milner has expanded for season 2025, with defending national champion Milner being joined by Jonte Reynders from Sherco and Korey McMahon from GASGAS in a high-profile, three-rider Australian Enduro Championship (AEC) roster.

Milner achieved a remarkable homecoming last season as both team owner/rider in KTM Australia's official off-road program, dominating the series – formerly the Australian Off-Road Championship (AORC) – Outright and in the E2 category onboard the KTM 450 XC-F. Defending his titles is the primary goal for 2025, alongside team ownership/management duties in fielding new rider signings Reynders and McMahon.

5 THINGS WE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT KOREY MCMAHON

1. In 2018 McMahon finished eighth at the FIM Motocross Junior World Champs
2. He won the J4 title at his first attempt in 2018
3. In 2021 McMahon raced, AORC, ProMX and Finke
4. Represented Team Australia at the 2022 ISDE
5. He finished 4th in the 2021 Finke in only his second attempt

TEAM OWNER
DANIEL MILNER

"I'm excited for Korey and Jonte to be joining my KTM DM31 Racing Team and I hope to share my knowledge and the race skills that I have learnt over the years while I am still at the top of my game. I have observed Jonte and Korey all last year and really admire their drive and determination to improve and – most of all – win, which I believe was a standout amongst the field. I'm absolutely stoked to have them on my team and am looking forward to pushing them to reach their potential.

"For me, it's business as usual making sure I get myself and my sponsors on that top step again. Being back on the KTM last year was amazing and has brought the fun back into racing, with the added motivation of starting my own team and beginning the next chapter of my career. Without KTM and all of our generous sponsors, I would not be able to run this team and keep my dreams alive."

THE RIDER
KOREY MCMAHON

McMahon, meanwhile, has proven to be one of the most versatile racers in the country and is stepping up to the E3 class for 2025 riding a KTM 500 EXC-F with the KTM DM31 Racing Team. He placed second in the E1 standings last year, in addition to finishing third on the Finke Desert Race podium and then P3 in the Over 450 Four-Stroke class at the Hattah Desert Race, showcasing his capabilities on larger capacity machinery.

"Joining KTM alongside Daniel as team manager is incredibly exciting for me, as the experience he brings to the team is second to none. It has always been my goal to ride for KTM in the senior ranks, since it is the bike that I have ridden my entire life before switching to GASGAS in recent seasons.

"Many changes are happening for me in 2025, because not only am I on a new brand, but stepping up to the E3 class is something that I have aspired to do for a long time. I now have the best people around me to help with this transition so overall I am thrilled to be part of this program in 2025 and cannot wait to see what we can achieve for both the brand and the team moving forward."

KTM MOTORSPORT MANAGER
KYLE BLUNDEN

Kyle Blunden, KTM Group Australia Motorsport Manager, is confident that the newly expanded team will be a strong contender in the 2025 AEC season.

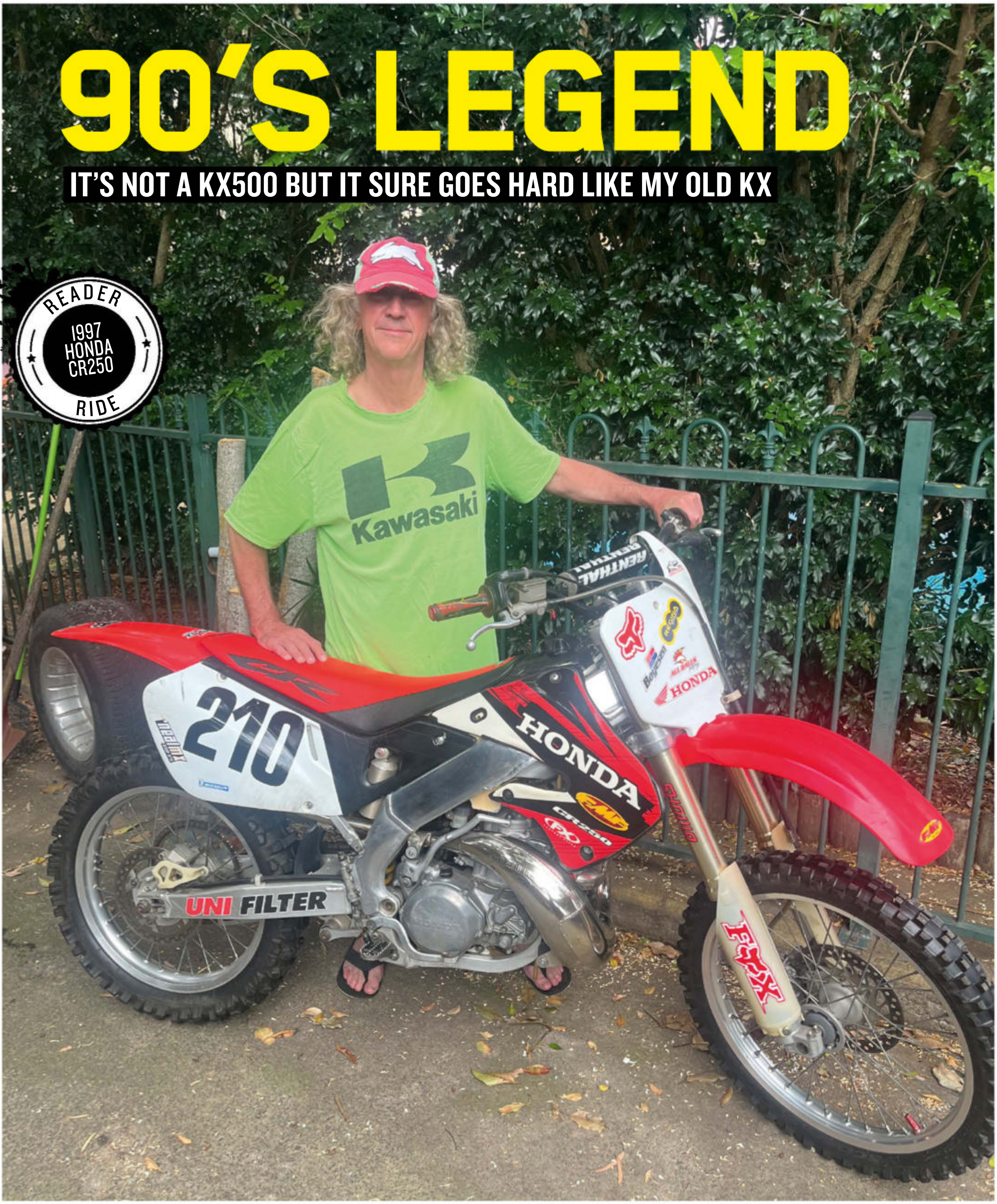
"I'm delighted with our KTM line-up for 2025. Daniel Milner's proven leadership and expertise, paired with the exciting potential of Jonte Reynders and Korey McMahon, make this team a force to be reckoned with. Daniel's putting together a fantastic team of committed partners and we're confident our riders will showcase the performance and race-winning pedigree KTM is known for, and we're eager to see how they finish out the 2025 Australian Enduro Championship."

> *"Joining KTM alongside Daniel as team manager is incredibly exciting for me"*

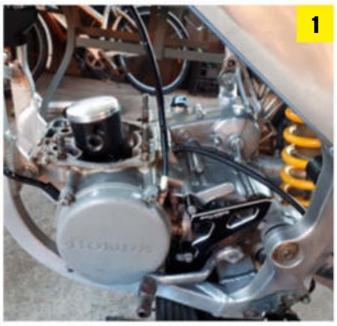
90'S LEGEND

IT'S NOT A KX500 BUT IT SURE GOES HARD LIKE MY OLD KX

READER
1997
HONDA
CR250
RIDE


Kawasaki
210
HONDA
UNI FILTER
FOX

1



WHY DID YOU BUY IT?

My son was getting too big for his Suzuki DS80 when he was younger so I thought I would get a bigger bike that I could ride. I have always liked two-stroke Hondas. I had several of them back when I was young. As for how I brought the bike, I remembered a customer on my old postal run had a Honda CR250 ages ago, then one day I went and saw him and to my surprise he still had the thing! But it was at his factory and had been converted into a supermotard with huge brakes, and then after two months of hassling him every week he finally produced the beast!

2

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO IT?

When I got the bike it was still in fairly decent condition and rode really nice but the suspension was pretty bad due to it still being setup for motard racing, so I ended up redoing the suspension and steering head bearings. I got five years out of the old girl then the engine blew up, so ended up doing a full rebuild and replaced everything on the engine and the bike with new hoses, re-sleeved barrel with teflon coated piston... too much to list but basically everything had been done.

HOW DOES IT GO?

For the first five years of ownership after I bought it she went like a rocket due to having motard gearing. With the sprockets it was straight to second gear and let's go! I didn't even bother with first gear. Then after finishing the rebuild and changing the gearing she goes even harder now.

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND BUYING ONE?

Yes! I would definitely recommend buying one. If you can't have fun on this bike you should give up on riding, or just ride a four-stroke, because nothing is better than a two-stroke going through the gears at high revs, and when that back wheel goes sideways and she's keeps going straight, it is just heaven!

3

THE BASICS

WHAT IS IT?
A 1997 Honda CR250.
WHO?
Michael Kelly
WHERE DID YOU BUY IT?
On my postal run in Strathfield.
HOW MUCH?
$1500

5 UNIQUE THINGS ABOUT MICHAEL AND HIS BIKE

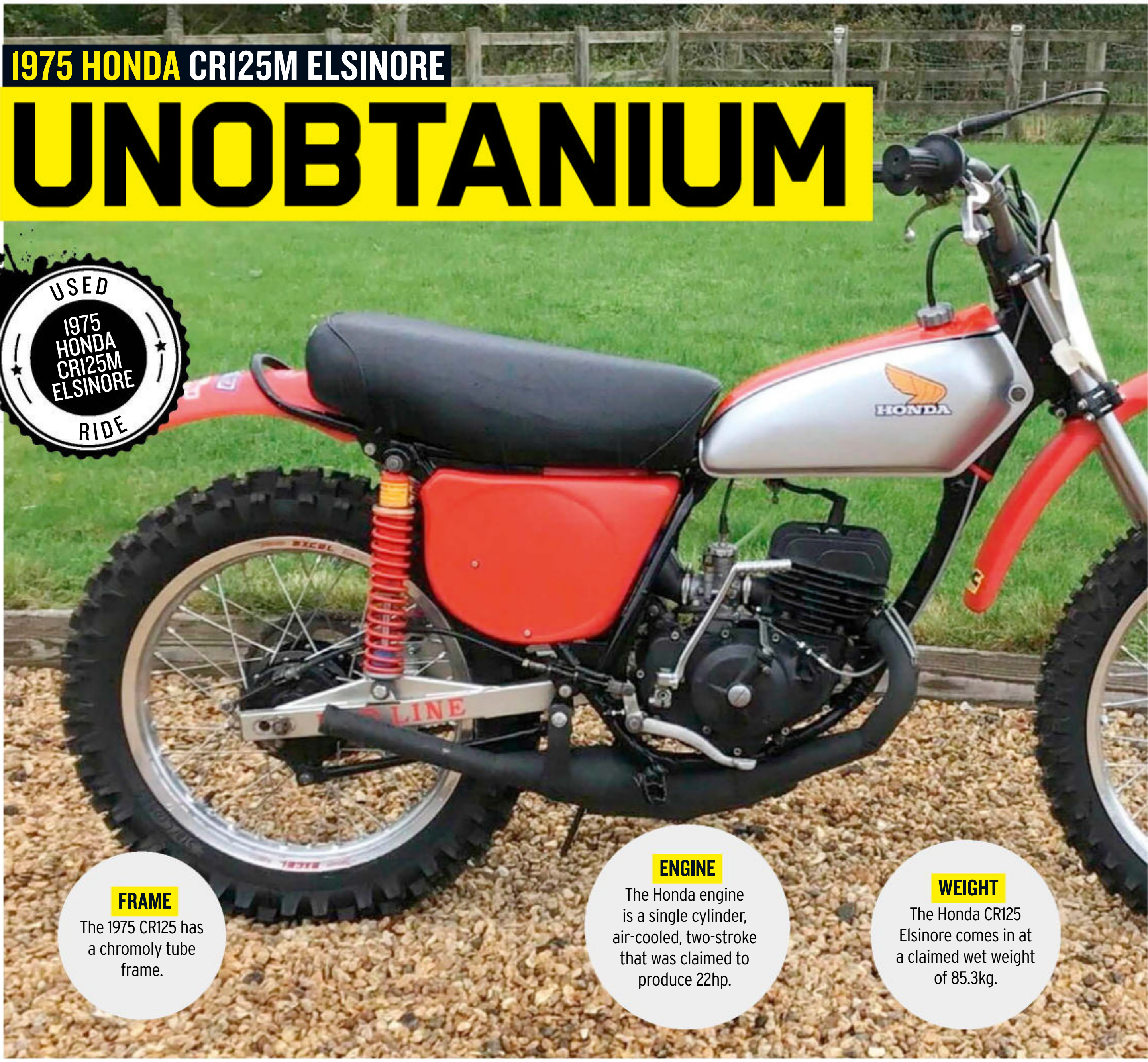
1. It's not a KX500 but it sure goes hard like my old KX
2. What more can be said? It's a Honda!
3. It's a two-stroke and nothing sounds better.
4. I have owned the bike for just over 10 years.
5. It puts a smile on my face and anyone who rides it.

1. Teflon coated piston went in
2. End product after the rebuild
3. Hard to source pipes this shiney

1975 HONDA CR125M ELSINORE

UNOBTANIUM

USED
1975
HONDA
CR125M
ELSINORE
RIDE



FRAME
The 1975 CR125 has a chromoly tube frame.

ENGINE
The Honda engine is a single cylinder, air-cooled, two-stroke that was claimed to produce 22hp.

WEIGHT
The Honda CR125 Elsinore comes in at a claimed wet weight of 85.3kg.

FOR ME, THE 1975 CR125M Honda Elsinore is a tough bike to write a review on as it was released a decade before I was born. Nevertheless, for my entire life I have heard my Dad rave about the bike and how fantastic it was. While he never had one, one of his mates did, and he parked it up in his back shed after it stopped one day and there it has sat for the last 35 years, covered in a tarp despite my Dad's ongoing attempts to purchase it from him to fix it up and restore it.

Maybe one day my Dad will get his hands on that Elsinore but my experience starts and stops with the very few I have seen come through my shop for repairs. Most commonly I only ever see cylinders or heads come in to be repaired as someone is having a go at doing one up at home, and while they can bolt a few parts together here and there, they can't machine a cylinder or a head, so I get those odd jobs.

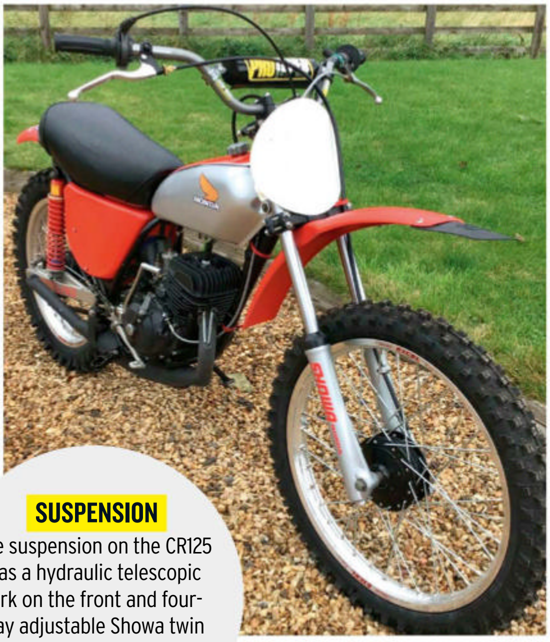
Like any old bike the CR125M Elsinore is most commonly restored at home by backyard enthusiasts and while many of them are quite good I would have to say the majority are not, and these bikes get years worth of bodgie repairs until someone comes along with enough knowledge to restore them properly.

If you happen to find a 1975 CR125M in restored condition then you are certainly going to have to fork out a fair sum of money to purchase it. Even one in poor condition will still fetch a decent dollar. This is why

SHOWA
HONDA
EXCEL

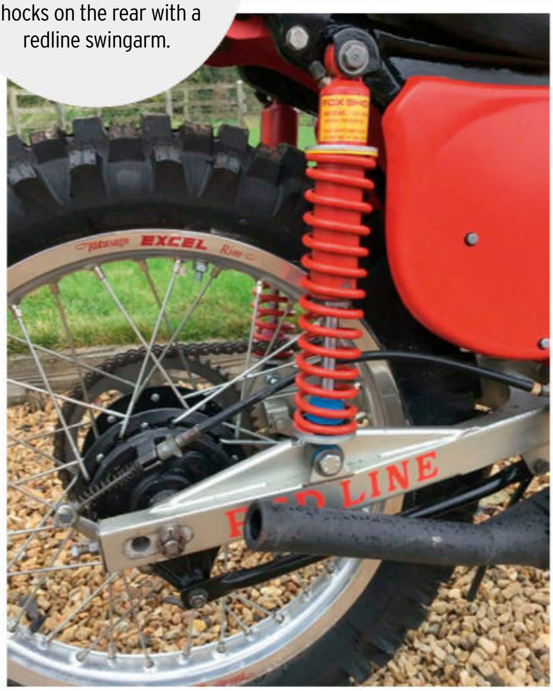
BRAKES

Both the front and rear brakes on the CR125 are cable operated disc brakes.



SUSPENSION

The suspension on the CR125 was a hydraulic telescopic fork on the front and four-way adjustable Showa twin shocks on the rear with a redline swingarm.



Redbook is irrelevant to these old models, as these old bikes are worth 10 times what they were new, and they were imported into Australia by private importers long before the likes of Honda Australia existed.

Unfortunately you aren't going to have a plethora of Elsinores to choose from so it's a bit of a case of buy whatever you can find. If the bike has been restored on the outside and the inside of the engine is still old and worn, then that bike is going to be worth less than one that has been restored inside and out. The closer to original the more the bike is worth, and if it is in top quality original condition, and has never been restored, then you are sitting on a gem.

Finding parts for these old things is rather tricky. If you are in the special circle of distinguished gentleman who manage to source parts through a guy that knows a guy, then no worries, but if you are unlucky enough to be on your own then you'll likely have to source a lot of parts from overseas... and be prepared to wait for parts to show up.

Tech Ed Mat Boyd

NEW

1975 $N/A

SECONDHAND

1975 $N/A

Prices according to redbook.com.au

MARKET EQUIVALENT

1975

Yamaha MX125

$N/A

1975

Can-Am 125 Mx2

$N/A

1975

Suzuki RM125S

$N/A

1975

Kawasaki KX125

$N/A

BIKES FROM THE DAYS WHEN DINOSAURS ROAMED THE PITS.

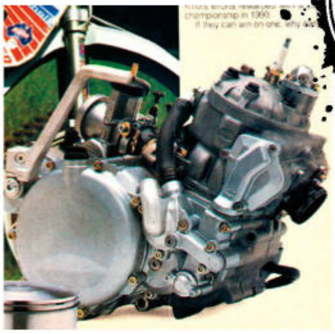
A PLAN FOR WORLD DOMINATION

HERITAGE
1990
KTM
250 MX
RIDE

KTM TOOK a new direction with this model with a lot of input from Broc Glover and other KTM development riders, and their aim was to take a big slice of the American market from the Japanese. The 1989 production bike was virtually thrown out in order to start again, with the front hub and throttle being about the only parts kept. Glover may not have won the World Championship but he did win motos on the bike making a dent in the Japanese domination. KTM Australia rider Andy Haydon also scored impressive results and the bike used for this test actually carried Haydon to third place at the Bathurst Bonanza Supercross.

The big change in the engine was moving the kickstarter to the right-hand side and the chain drive to the left, which was in some way to pander to the market more accustomed to right-side kicking but it also solved the traditionally notchy feeling gear changes and missed shifts. Inside the gearbox was a totally new transmission and clutch as well. Another feature was the TVC (Twin Valve Control) system that varied the height of the centre exhaust port as well as two smaller side ports for significantly more bottom-end grunt from idle to a shrieking top-end. It was said that the spread of power was matched by virtually no other motocross engine.

Their aim was to take a big slice of the American market



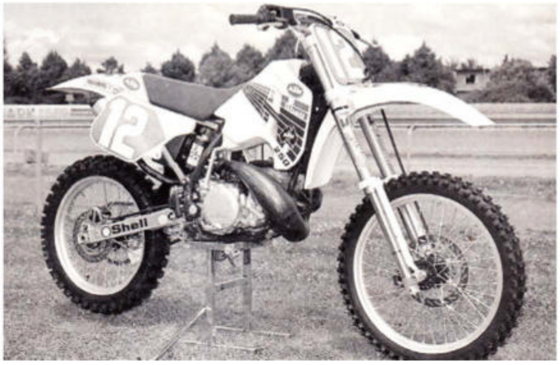
The engine breathed through a 37mm Keihin flat-slide carburettor and a case reed induction system feeding a Nikasil cylinder and Mahle piston, which it was said would ensure a long engine life. Dutch built White Power suspension graced either end with a fully adjustable 4054 USD fork and an integral reservoir rear shock. The externally adjusted fork was smooth and progressive and "supple enough to provide traction even on hard skittery corners and progressive enough to soak up big jolts on huge jumps". The rear shock didn't impress as much, due to a too light spring, not the shock itself.

Handling was judged as very good with "top-class turning manners" and the test says the bike handled extremely well responding equally to a brake slide cut-and-thrash approach as it did to railing the outside of a berm. Jumping the bike was judged to be pleasant with the slim design helping in mid-air corrections as did the powerful rear brake. The chassis was new with a removable aluminium subframe giving easy access to the shock, linkages and airbox. Brakes were judged as strong yet progressive allowing good feel and late braking.

Other odds and ends making up the complete package were Excel rims, a removable clutch cover, Acerbis plastics, Regina chain, Dunlop 990 tyres and Renthal-style handlebar. The gearbox was a five-speed, ignition was by CDI, front travel was 295mm and rear 315mm, both with adjustable rebound and compression. Disc brakes graced both wheels which were 21-inch and 19-inch, seat height was 930mm with 376mm of ground clearance, the tank held 10 litres of premix and the dry weight was claimed at 99kg. The conclusion of this test was that KTM had hit the nail on the head in all departments and with the price being only slightly higher than the Japanese options (the RM250L tested in the same issue cost $5599), there should have been more KTMs appearing on start lines.

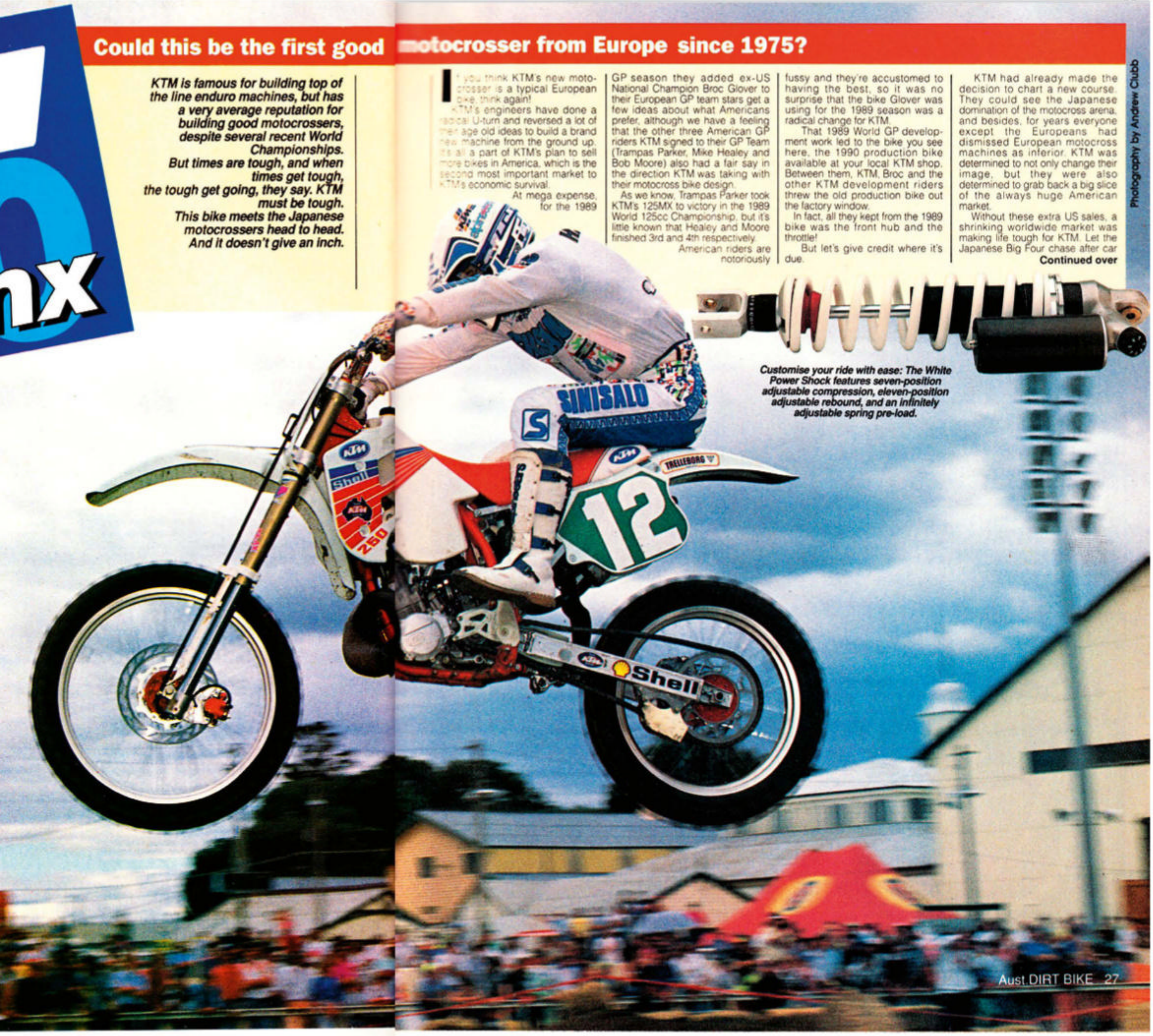
Heritage Editor Warren Jack

Aust.DIRT BIKE



THE BASICS

WHAT
1990 KTM 250 MX
WHEN
FEBRUARY 1990, ISSUE125
PURPOSE
MOTOCROSSER
HOW MUCH
$6099



Could this be the first good motocrosser from Europe since 1975?

KTM is famous for building top of the line enduro machines, but has a very average reputation for building good motocrossers, despite several recent World Championships.
But times are tough, and when times get tough, the tough get going, they say. KTM must be tough.
This bike meets the Japanese motocrossers head to head.
And it doesn't give an inch.

If you think KTM's new motocrosser is a typical European bike, think again!

KTM's engineers have done a radical U-turn and reversed a lot of their age old ideas to build a brand new machine from the ground up. It's all a part of KTM's plan to sell more bikes in America, which is the second most important market to KTM's economic survival.

At mega expense, for the 1989 GP season they added ex-US National Champion Broc Glover to their European GP team stars get a few ideas about what Americans prefer, although we have a feeling that the other three American GP riders KTM signed to their GP Team (Trampas Parker, Mike Healey and Bob Moore) also had a fair say in the direction KTM was taking with their motocross bike design.

As we know, Trampas Parker took KTM's 125MX to victory in the 1989 World 125cc Championship, but it's little known that Healey and Moore finished 3rd and 4th respectively.

American riders are notoriously fussy and they're accustomed to having the best, so it was no surprise that the bike Glover was using for the 1989 season was a radical change for KTM.

That 1989 World GP development work led to the bike you see here, the 1990 production bike available at your local KTM shop. Between them, KTM, Broc and the other KTM development riders threw the old production bike out the factory window.

In fact, all they kept from the 1989 bike was the front hub and the throttle!

But let's give credit where it's due.

KTM had already made the decision to chart a new course. They could see the Japanese domination of the motocross arena, and besides, for years everyone except the Europeans had dismissed European motocross machines as inferior. KTM was determined to not only change their image, but they were also determined to grab back a big slice of the always huge American market.

Without these extra US sales, a shrinking worldwide market was making life tough for KTM. Let the Japanese Big Four chase after car

Continued over

Photography by Andrew Clubb

Customise your ride with ease: The White Power Shock features seven-position adjustable compression, eleven-position adjustable rebound, and an infinitely adjustable spring pre-load.

Aust DIRT BIKE 27

TALKING POINT

WHAT HAPPENED BACK THEN...

- Stefan Merriman crashed at round three of the World Enduro Championship in Italy and was rushed to hospital where they removed his spleen.

- BMW released the air suspended 175kg R 1200 GS HP2 announcing it would reach Australia in the third quarter but in limited numbers.

- Octagon Australia was forced to cancel the 2005 Australasian Safari due to lack of a suitable venue and money, despite a healthy amount of interest from competitors.

- Husqvarna distributor Paul Feeney Group formed an all-woman motocross team called Husky Chix to compete in Queensland events.

- A CR250 to be used by Seth Enslow at the Crusty Night Of Records was stolen from the Team Moto Honda dealership but the thief cut himself badly leaving an easily followed blood trail.

FlashBack

JULY 2005, ISSUE NO. 310, 188 PAGES, $7.50

THE NINTENDO DS was released in Australia. Federal Health Minister Tony Abbott announced that his alleged long lost son is actually the son of another man, according to DNA testing. The Bali Nine were arrested for drug smuggling in Indonesia. A 15-year-old known as 'Tram Boy' allegedly stole a tram in Melbourne and drove around for 40 minutes before being stopped by police. Schapelle Corby was convicted of drug smuggling by an Indonesian court and sentenced to 20 years in prison. Aussie horror flick *Wolf Creek* was released. *Good Morning Australia* finished its 12-year run on Network Ten from the studios of ATV-10. Troy Corser took both race victories in front of his home crowd at the Superbike World Championship round at Phillip Island.

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21 BUMBAG MUST-HAVES
HOW TO CLIMB HILL RUTS with Stuart Morgan
THE 10 WORST MX bikes ever built
2005 AUSTRALIAN OFF-RO
AJ Roberts sto
PRODUCT $300-$500 BOOTS The 16 best buys
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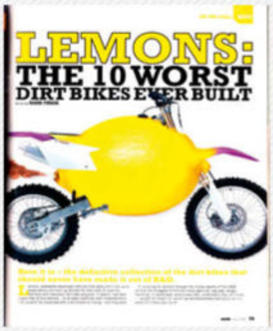
ON THE COVER: AJ Roberts blasts a berm on his Husky WR250 showing the form that won him the first round of the Yamaha Australian Off-Road Series at Raymond Terrace.

Top Tests

DOUBLE FUN


LEMONS: THE 10 WORST DIRT BIKES EVER BUILT

DOUBLE FUN

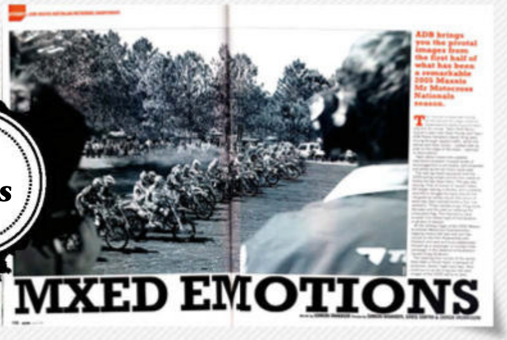
The popularity of Supermoto had extended beyond the racetrack and onto the roads so *ADB* had a look at the options available, breaking them down into three categories: Racer, Trail Convert and Cafe Racer. The first obviously enough was for the serious racer who wanted to take it to the road racer crowd on a dirtbike, the second was for the rider who rode dirt on weekends but wanted a sporty commute on weekdays, and the third was for those who wanted to exude cool with an edge of bad boy vibes without any real effort. We also looked at the parts needed for said conversion, for either a motocrosser or enduro bike compared to the cost of a supermotard specific model that some of the Euro factories produced.

THE 10 WORST DIRTBIKES EVER BUILT

The late Mark Firkin put together this story on bikes that not only missed the mark but were still in the pits fuelling up when the starter's flag dropped. First and foremost was the Cannondale MX400 built by MTB manufacturer Cannondale that was so innovative on paper that Yank magazine *Dirt Rider* awarded it 1999 Bike Of The Year before it was on sale or anybody had even ridden it. It had EFI, programmable ignition, a reversed head, aluminium frame, linkless shock and cassette style gearbox. In reality it was slower and heavier than a YZ426F, hard to start off the button, had unbalanced suspension and "vibrated like a lonely housewife's best friend".

Top Reads

dirt bike insurance DEMYSTIFIED


MXED EMOTIONS

DIRT BIKE INSURANCE DEMYSTIFIED

We tried to unravel the ins and outs of insurance from the companies willing to talk to us when we mentioned bikes, especially un-registrable ones. We approached nine different companies and four refused to cover bikes. Those that did had many conditions such as theft cover only from a locked and secured building, only two would cover quads for fire, theft and transit, and only three were willing to cover the bike in use… and then only for registered bikes. We heard some horror theft stories such as 12 bikes wheeled through a house full of sleeping riders, a woman who had a gun pointed at her when she disturbed the thieves, and one bloke who ducked home for a piss before returning to find his trailer empty.

2005 MAXXIS MISTER MOTOCROSS NATIONALS

This piece was a pictorial roundup of the first four rounds of the eight round Mister Motocross Series and the King brothers, along with Daryl Hurley, were looking to make it an all-Kiwi affair with Craig Anderson out with a broken foot until round seven. The track at Toowoomba attracted 3500 spectators and high praise for its natural terrain layout as some previous circuits had been bike breakers racking up DNFs and injuries to riders.

Ads back then

FERODO BRAKES… There is a difference

FERODO RACING BRAKES

JUST STOP

Ferodo was name-dropping a few world champions who used its brake pads in this ad but after 100 years in the game and a slew of championships it had a reason to.

Precision Hubs

Think Hubs? TALON, there is only 1 answer!

$1400

Talon

COLOUR OR CARBON

Talon could boast 25 years of production and not only supplied anodised alloy hubs but carbon fibre finished ones as well.

Proven Formula

Academy of Off Road Riding

YAMAHA

SCHOOL TIME

There's no denying that the Academy Of Off Road Riding has turned out a good number of champions and will no doubt continue to do so.

DESERT DREAMS

FROM FINKE TO DAKAR TO HATTAH, TODD RECOUNTS THE HIGHS AND LOWS

FIVE MINUTES WITH TODD SMITH

How did your life on bikes begin?
I started in 1993 on a Yamaha PW50 at seven years old just riding around the backyard to start with then I moved up to a Suzuki DS80 after joining the local bike club, Condobolin Autosports. They were big on flat track and I started racing on a Kawasaki KX60 before getting a Honda CR80 by the time I was nine. I was getting plenty of seconds in those days to Casey Stoner and then I tried motocross when I was 11 riding a Kawasaki KX80. I eventually gave flat track away concentrating on motocross riding a Honda CR80 at first and then a KTM 125 by the time I was 13.

You racked up wins from an early age, didn't you?
I won the Junior NSW State MX Title in my age group three years running, 13 years in 1999, 14 in 2000 and 15 years in 2001, before going into Seniors. Then I won the 2004/2005 NSW Pro Open Motocross Title, some NSW Stadium MX Series in I think '03/'04. I won the Condo 750 and in 2011 the Australasian Safari, beating three times Dakar winner Cyril Despres, and I won Finke in 2013.

I went to the Dakar Rally twice after that finishing 33rd in 2013 and 18th in 2017. I crashed a few days out from the finish in 2017 and thought I'd broken some ribs but when I got home I discovered I'd crushed some vertebrae. I also rode the Hattah desert race for the win in the Over 35 Class in 2023 and 2024.

Why the change to desert racing?
When I moved to Seniors I rode some Thumper Nats on a KTM 450 SX-F to start and then went to the MX Nationals in 2002 on a KTM 125 SX, finishing the season about 19th or 20th. I also rode the Stadium Motocross Series that year and then in 2003 moved to the open class on a KTM 450 SX-F riding national events. In 2004 I was offered a ride by Sam Laws Yamaha and that's when I started in desert racing after Sam suggested I have a go at the Condo 750 and I was leading until the motor shit itself.

I stayed with Sam Laws for 2005 riding a YZ250 in the indoors supercross events, plus the motocross nationals again, and crashed out of the 2006 Condo 750. I then had a year off and went overseas and came back in 2008 and raced in the Australasian Safari, still Yamaha mounted, and then in 2009 I did a full desert campaign including Finke and Hattah swapping to KTM for the Safari.

Which win stands out in your memory?
Finke in 2013 is a major one, winning it after six attempts scoring eighth, second, fourth and third before winning. That was when I was riding for Glen Hoffman Honda and I had a run of bad luck in subsequent Finkes. I had a year off after breaking my neck, the next year I finished seventh after jamming a stick in my arm, and in 2017 I broke my leg and finished seventh again.

Are there any events on your list still to do?
I'd like to have a go at the Baja 1000 and I intend to have a run in the Don River Dash this year just for the fun of it. I still ride Hattah and scored a father/son double in 2024, me in the Over 35s and my son in the 65 Class, so that was pretty special – he surprised me really.

So you're still riding then, what's in your shed?
I've got a Husqvarna 501 for Hattah, a 2017 Honda CRF450R and a 2005 Yamaha YZ250 as it was cheap and I've always wanted another two-stroke. The YZ250 is a great stress reliever after a bad day at work.

Does any bike from your past rate as a favourite?
The GHR Honda CRF450R that I won Finke on holds that spot – it was a perfectly balanced bike, it never put a foot wrong no matter what sort of bumps I hit. It would have to be the stand out of all my bikes, a great overall package.

To finish up, what was your hardest race?
The 2013 Dakar which was in Peru, Argentina and Chile. I was riding a GHR Honda and we had all sorts of mechanical issues due to the extremes of the event, temperature, altitude, things like that. I had overheating problems climbing the dunes with the temp gauge hitting 130, meaning I had to idle on the downhill sides to cool it down again. I broke down one day and needed a tow for 400km only just making it to the bivouac in time; on another day my map tower broke so I had to ride holding it together with one hand. I was quite happy to see the finish line at the end.

Warren Jack

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MAITLAND DISTRICT MOTORCYCLE CLUB

FAMILY-FOCUSED MOTOCROSS IN THE HEART OF THE HUNTER

LOCATED AT BOB Robinson Park, 60 Kyle Street, Rutherford – just off the New England Highway west of Maitland – the Maitland District Motorcycle Club (MDMCC) is one of the Hunter Valley's leading motocross hubs. With a community of more than 500 riders aged four to over 50, the club proudly fosters a safe, inclusive and family-oriented environment for motocross enthusiasts of all levels.

Whether it's a young nipper taking their first ride on a 50cc or a senior chasing gates on race day, MDMCC has something for everyone. The club offers non-competitive riding for kids aged four to nine in the 50cc Demo class, with help available from the committee to organise first ride days and license requirements. Juniors must complete a Kickstart Program to apply for a competition licence, and the club provides support to make the process simple and stress-free. Senior riders who are new to licensing may need to complete a theory test and possibly a ride assessment, depending on their road licence status. The club assists with all the necessary paperwork and approvals through Motorcycling NSW.

MDMCC is a not-for-profit organisation run entirely by passionate volunteers. Every dollar earned from race meetings goes directly back into track upgrades, facility improvements and rider development programs. The club exists thanks to the many locals who donate their time and energy behind the scenes, plus the businesses and sponsors who've helped support both the club and its youth members.

Throughout the year, MDMCC also runs official training days for juniors and seniors, including Kickstart sessions, endorsement training for larger bikes and skills-development clinics. Training generally costs $30 per rider and is available to current club members. All updates and bookings are managed via the club's Facebook page.

MDMCC is located within the Rutherford Industrial Estate, making it easily accessible from the surrounding areas. The club's facilities are situated just west of Maitland and provide a purpose-built motocross venue where riders of all levels can develop their skills in a controlled environment.

The Maitland District Motorcycle Club isn't just about racing – it's about community, family and opportunity. From its well-maintained facilities to its commitment to safety, inclusivity and growth, MDMCC has earned its reputation as one of New South Wales' most welcoming motocross clubs.

CANTEEN STAFF

KEY FACTS

- Catering to all ages – From four-year-old Nippers to 50+ veterans, there are rider classes for every stage of the motocross journey.
- Volunteer-driven Club – 100% of profits are reinvested into track maintenance and member programs, thanks to an incredible group of volunteers.
- Accredited safety supervision – All events are run under the watch of Motorcycling NSW-accredited officials, ensuring a controlled and safe riding environment.
- Affordable training opportunities – With Kickstart and skill-development days run throughout the year, riders can grow safely and affordably.
- Inclusive family atmosphere – MDMCC fosters a welcoming community where riders and families alike can enjoy the sport, make friends and support one another.

LOCATION

- Bob Robinson Park, 60 Kyle Street, Rutherford

COST

- Junior - $55
- Senior - $55
- Family - $75

CONTACT

P: 0414 844 136
E: secretarymdmcc@outlook.com
W: www.maitlanddistrictmotorcycleclub.com.au

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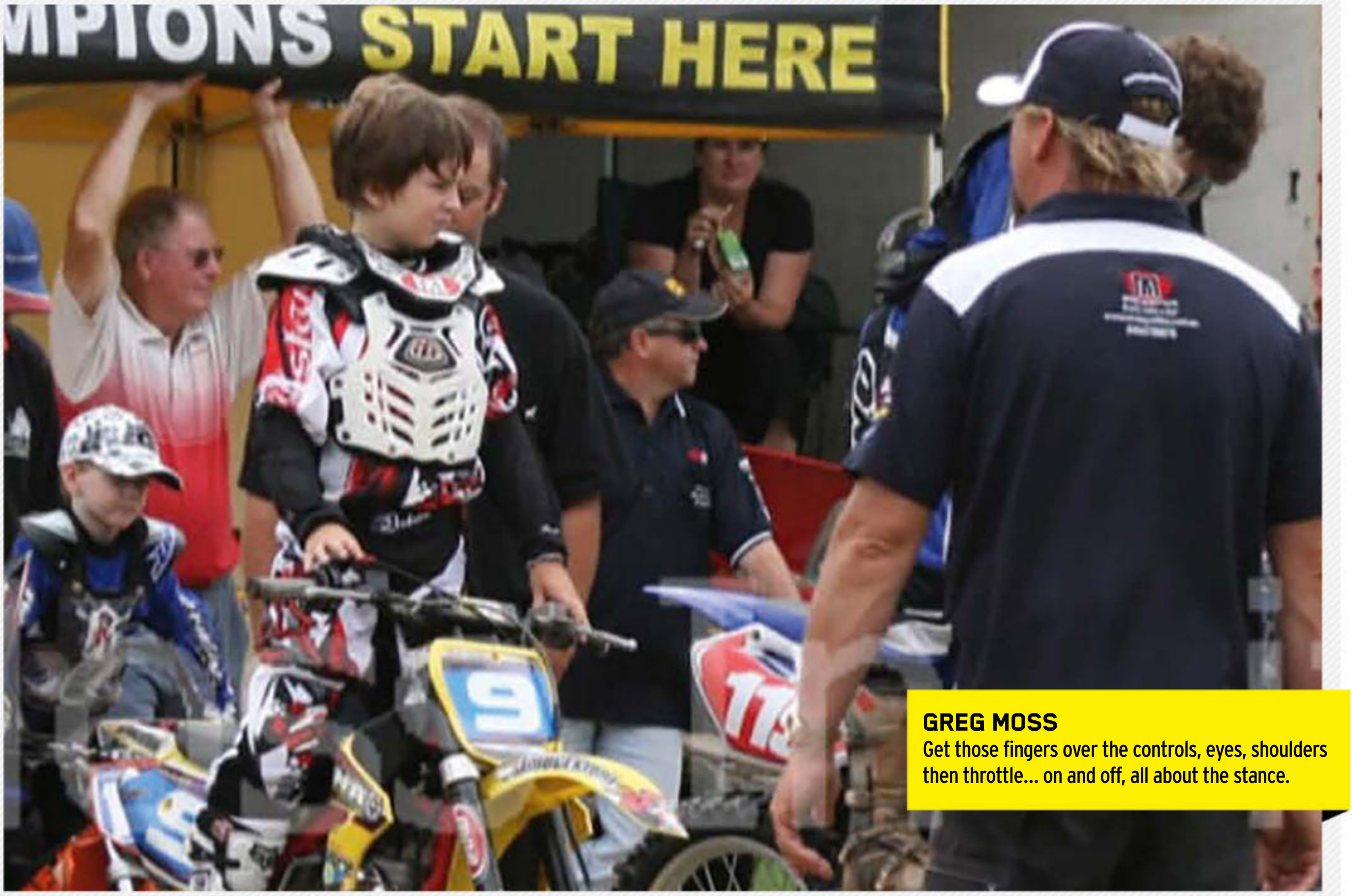
KEVIN HARRIS
Getting a bit of hard enduro practice in on the Beta.

MARTIN WRIGHT
Here is an old Roo that landed in my shop today. Sorry I missed you Max Sullivan!



GREG MOSS
Get those fingers over the controls, eyes, shoulders then throttle... on and off, all about the stance.

JASON HENDER
Popping a wheelie over a log on his Yamaha WR-F.

THOMAS BROWN
Cutting our way back through a few tracks after the cyclone, Coffs coast.

AYLA BAIMBRIDGE (WINNER)
I need that Ogio bag for track days
and starting school next year!

CONGRATS, AYLA

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Todd Anderson ☎ 0409 603 733

todd@motormedia.com.au

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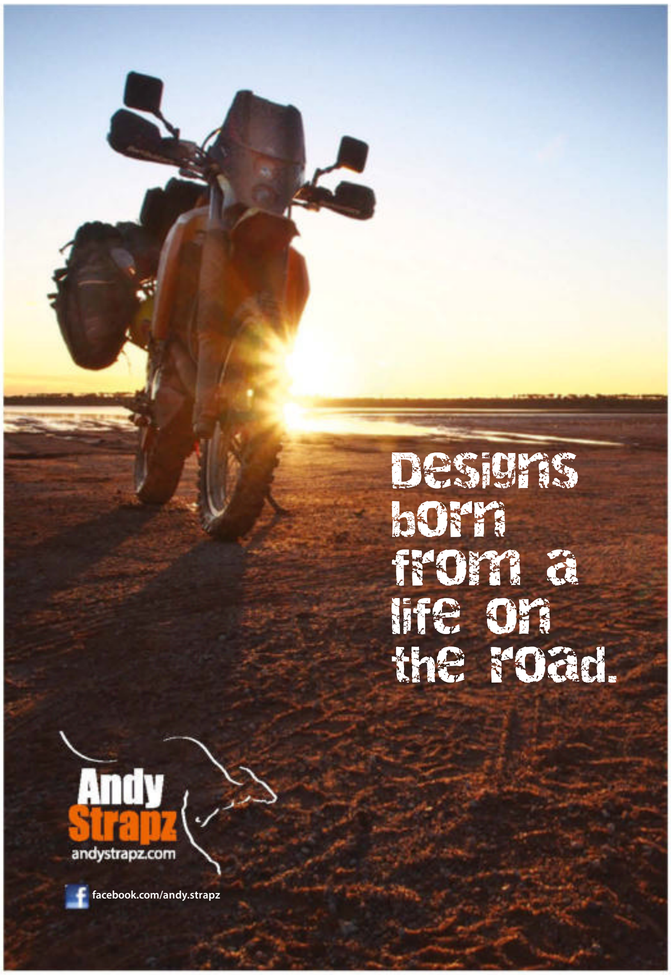

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ENGINE T TWO-STROKE F FOUR-STROKE E ELECTRIC

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
APRILIA aprilia.com.au 0414 410 627						
Tuareg 660	A	F	820	15	I	$23,540
BENELLI benelli.com.au (03) 9387 8827						
TRK251	A	F	800	18	B	$6,690*
TRK502	A	F	800	20	I	$9,990*
TRK502X	A	F	850	20	I	$10,690*
BETA betamotor.com.au (07) 3518 4000						
RR125 Enduro	E	T	930	9.5	P	$13,795*
RR200 Enduro	E	T	930	9.5	P	$15,095*
RR250 Enduro	E	T	930	9.5	P	$15,295*
RR300 Enduro	E	T	930	9.5	P	$16,625*
RR350 Enduro	E	F	940	9.1	I	$15,895*
RR390 Enduro	E	F	940	9.1	I	$16,395*
RR430 Enduro	E	F	940	9.1	P	$16,395*
RR480 Enduro	E	F	940	9.1	P	$16,895*
RR125 Racing	E	T	930	9.5	I	$14,995*
RR200 Racing	E	T	930	9.5	I	$16,795*
RR250 Racing	E	T	930	9.5	P	$17,195*
RR300 Racing	E	T	930	9.5	P	$18,395*
RR350 Racing	E	F	940	9.1	P	$17,795*
RR390 Racing	E	F	940	9.1	P	$18,295*
RR430 Racing	E	F	940	9.1	P	$18,295*
RR480 Racing	E	F	940	9.1	P	$18,795*
XTrainer 250	T	T	910	8.5	I	$13,495*
XTrainer 300	T	T	910	8.5	I	$13,995*
RX300	M	T	940	9.5	E	$14,245*
RX450	M	F	945	9.5	E	$14,945*
BMW bmwmotorrad.com.au 1800 813 299						
F800GS	A	F	815	15	I	$16,685*
F900GS	A	F	860	15	I	$21,655*
F900GS Adventure	A	F	860	15	I	$22,965*
R 1250 GS	A	F	850	20	E	$27,640*
R1250GS Rallye	A	F	850	20	E	$31,410
R1250GS Rallye X	A	F	890	20	E	$31,750
R 1250 GS Adventure	A	F	890	30	E	$29,850*
R1250GS Adv. Rallye	A	F	890	30	E	$33,430
R1250GS Adv. Rallye X	A	F	880	30	E	$33,320
R1250GS Adv. 40 Year GS	A	F	890	30	E	$34,965
R 1300 GS	A	F	850	20	E	$28,280*
CFMOTO cfmoto.com.au (03) 9918 8000						
450MT	A	F	820	N/A	I	$9490*
800MT Touring	A	F	825	19	I	$14,990*
800MT Touring LE	A	F	825	19	I	$16,490*
800MT Explore	A	F	825	19	I	$16,990*
CROSSFIRE crossfiremotorcycles.com (02) 9822 8899						
CF50	P	F	560	3	B	$1,399
CF70	P	F	549	2.6	B	$1,376
CF110	P	F	770	3.0	B	$1,699
CF125	P	F	770	3.0	B	$1,836
CF140	P	F	830	5.2	B	$2,141
CF250	P	F	860	6.3	B	$2,753
CFR300	P	F	930	6.5	B	$3,995
DUCATI ducati.com.au (02) 9741 3000						
Scrambler Desert Sled	S	F	860	13.5	I	$19,500*
DesertX	A	F	875	21	E	$26,400*
DesertX Rally	A	F	910	21	E	$36,800*
Multistrada V4 Rally	A	F	840	22	E	$41,600*
GASGAS gasgas.com 1800 644 771						
MC-E2	M	E	470	N/A	B	$4,095
MC-E3	M	E	555	N/A	B	$7,080
MC-E5	M	E	665	N/A	I	$10,155
MC 50	M	F	684	2.3	I	$6,215
MC 65	M	F	750	3.5	I	$7,815
MC 85SW	M	F	850	5.2	I	$9,215
MC 85BW	M	F	890	5.2	I	$9,335
MC 125	M	F	950	7.0	E	$12,225
MC 150	M	F	950	7.0	E	$12,695
EC 250	E	T	956	8.5	E	$15,055
EC 250F	E	F	956	8.5	E	$15,055
EX 250F	XC	F	956	8.5	E	$15,055
MC 250	M	T	956	7.0	E	$13,335
MC 250F	M	F	956	7.0	E	$13,395
EC 300	E	T	956	8.5	E	$16,565
EX 300	XC	T	956	8.5	E	$14,645
EC 350F	E	F	956	8.5	E	$16,125
EX 350F	XC	F	956	8.5	E	$15,195
MC 350F	M	F	956	7.0	E	$14,145
MC 450F	M	F	956	7.0	E	$14,465
EC 450F	E	F	956	9.0	E	$16,455
EC 500F	E	F	956	9.0	E	$17,155
HARLEY-DAVIDSON harley-davidson.com (02) 9886 0600						
Pan America Special	A	F	869	21.2	I	$28,995

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	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
CRF50F	P	F	548	2.6	B	$2,598
CRF110F	M	F	667	4.0	B	$3,998
CRF125F	P	F	735	4.3	B	$5,098
CRF125FB	P	F	785	4.3	B	$5,498
XR150L	P	F	825	12	E	$4,898
AG-XR190	T	F	823	12	B	$5,798
CRF150R	M	F	866	4.3	I	$8,598
CRF250F	T	F	884	6.0	I	$7,998
CRF250R	M	F	951	6.3	I	$13,598
CRF250RX	M	F	964	8.0	I	$13,598
CRF300L	T	F	875	7.7	I	$9,277
CRF300 Rally	A	F	895	12.8	I	$10,513
CRF450R	M	F	960	6.3	P	$14,498
CRF450RWE	M	F	960	6.3	P	$17,598
CRF450RX	M	F	960	8.5	P	$14,698
CRF1100A Africa Twin	A	F	870	18.8	E	$24,783
CRF1100 Adventure Sports	A	F	900	24.2	E	$28,079

HUSQVARNA

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	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
EE2	M	E	470	N/A	B	$4,095
EE3	M	E	600	N/A	B	$7,080
EE5	M	E	665	N/A	I	$10,155
TC 50	M	T	684	2.3	I	$6,295
TC 65	M	T	750	3.5	E	$7,895
TC 85SW	M	T	850	5.2	E	$9,385
TC 85BW	M	T	890	5.2	E	$9,495
TC 125	M	T	939	8.0	E	$13,215
TE 150	E	T	952	8.5	E	$13,215
FC 250	M	F	950	7.0	P	$14,425
FE 250	E	F	950	8.5	I	$16,495
TC 250	M	T	939	8.0	E	$14,375
TE 250	E	T	939	8.5	E	$16,495
TE 300	E	T	939	8.5	P	$18,165
TX 300	E	T	939	8.5	P	$16,255
FC 350	M	F	939	7.0	P	$15,255
FE 350	E	F	939	8.5	P	$17,675
FX 350	E	F	939	8.5	P	$16,375
FC 450	M	F	939	7.0	P	$15,595
FE 450	E	F	939	8.5	P	$18,055
FE 501	E	F	939	8.5	P	$18,755
701 Enduro	E	F	920	13.0	I	$20,795*
Norden 901	A	F	854	19.0	I	$26,270*
Norden 901 Expedition	A	F	854	19.0	I	$28,495*

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kawasaki.com.au (02) 9684 2585

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
KX65	M	T	760	3.8	I	$5,499*
KX85	M	T	840	5.5	I	$7,099*
KX85L	M	T	870	5.5	I	$7,299*
KLX110R	P	F	680	3.8	B	$3,149
KLX110RL	P	F	730	3.8	B	$3,449
KX112	M	T	870	5.0	I	$7,949
KLX140R	P	F	780	5.8	B	$5,049
KLX140RL	P	F	800	5.8	B	$5,449
KLX150BF SE	T	F	870	6.9	B	$4,749
KLX230 S	T	F	885	7.5	B	$6,949
KLX230R S	T	F	925	6.6	B	$6,499
Stockman	P	F	830	9.0	B	$6,649
KLX250	T	F	890	7.7	B	$7,449
KX250	M	F	950	6.2	P	$13,899
KX250X	E	F	945	6.2	P	$14,049
KLX300R	T	F	925	7.9	I	$7,649
KX450	M	F	950	6.2	P	$14,899
KX450X	E	F	950	6.2	P	$14,999
KLR650 S	A	F	870	23.0	I	$9,594
KLR650 Adventure	A	F	870	23.0	I	$10,999

KTM

ktm.com.au 1800 644 771

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
SX-E 2	M	E	470	N/A	B	$4,095
SX-E 3	M	E	600	N/A	B	$7,255
SX-E 5	M	E	665	N/A	I	$10,395
50 SX Factory Edition	M	T	558	2.3	I	$7,115
50 SX	M	T	684	2.3	I	$6,295
65 SX	M	T	750	3.5	I	$7,895
85 SX SW	M	T	850	5.2	I	$9,385
85 SX BW	M	T	890	5.2	I	$9,495
125 SX	M	T	850	8.0	I	$12,995
150 EXC	M	T	960	9.0	I	$14,155
250 EXC	E	T	960	9.0	P	$16,025
250 EXC Six Days	E	T	960	9.0	P	$17,975
250 EXC-F	E	F	960	9.0	I	$16,025
250 SX	M	T	950	7.5	P	$14,155
250 SX-F	M	F	950	7.0	P	$14,195
250 XC	T	T	950	8.5	I	$14,865
250 XC-F	T	F	950	8.5	I	$15,565
300 EXC	E	T	960	9.0	P	$17,625
300 EXC Six Days	E	T	960	9.0	P	$19,475
300 EXC Hard Enduro	E	T	960	9.0	P	$20,745
300 XC	T	T	950	8.5	P	$15,995
350 EXC-F	E	F	960	9.0	P	$17,165

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ENGINE T TWO-STROKE F FOUR-STROKE E ELECTRIC

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
350 EXC-F Six Days	E	F	960	9.0	I	$19,245
350 SX-F	E	F	950	7.0	I	$14,995
350 XC-F	E	F	950	7.0	P	$16,095
450 EXC-F	E	F	960	9.0	P	$17,525
450 EXC-F Six Days	E	F	960	9.0	P	$19,695
450 SX-F	M	F	950	7.0	P	$15,355
450 XC-F	E	F	950	8.5	P	$16,475
500 EXC-F	E	F	960	9.0	P	$18,195
500 EXC-F Six Days	E	F	960	9.0	P	$20,185
690 Enduro R	A	F	910	13.5	I	$20,695*
390 Adventure Spoked	A	F	855	14.5	I	$11,245*
890 Adventure	A	F	850	20	I	$24,995*
890 Adventure R	A	F	880	20	E	$27,295*
890 Adventure R Rally	A	F	910	20	E	$39,399*
1290 Super Adventure R	A	F	890	23	E	$35,495*

MOTO GUZZI

motoguzzi.com.au (03) 9381 9765

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
V85TT	A	F	830	23	E	$22,890*
V85TT Travel	A	F	830	23	E	$24,890*
V85TT Evocative	A	F	830	23	E	$23,390*

OSET

osetbikes.com 0419 634 948

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
12 Racing	P	E	390	-	B	$2,365
16 Racing	P,T	E	480	-	B,I,E	$3,100
20 Racing Mk II Lipo	P,T	E	550	-	B,I,E	$5,200
24 Racing	P,T	E	670	-	B,I	$6,300
MX10	M	E	515	-	B	$5,100

ROYAL ENFIELD

royalenfield.com.au 1300 869 245

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
Scram 411	P	F	795	15	B	$8,240
Himalayan 450	A	F	825/45	17	I	$9,190

RIEJU

rieju.com.au 1300 869 245

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
MR Ranger 200	T	T	925	9.8	I	$12,790
MR Ranger 300	T	T	925	9.8	I	$12,990
MR Racing 250	E	T	960	9.8	I	$13,990
MR Racing 300	E	T	960	9.8	I	$14,290
MR Pro 250	E	T	960	9.8	I	$15,690
MR Pro 300	E	T	960	9.8	I	$15,990

SHERCO

sherco.com.au (03) 8363 1600

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
125 SE Factory	E	T	950	10.4	E	$14,399
250 SE Factory	E	T	950	10.4	E	$16,299
300 SE Factory	E	T	950	10.4	P	$16,799
250 SEF Factory	E	F	950	9.7	E	$16,799
300 SEF Factory	E	F	950	9.7	P	$17,490
450 SEF Factory	E	F	950	9.7	E	$18,299
500 SEF Factory	E	F	950	9.7	E	$18,499

SUZUKI

suzukimotorcycles.com.au (03) 9931 0500

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
JR80	P	T	685	4.1	B	$2,890*
RM85R	M	T	875	5.0	I	$6,490*
DR-Z125	P	F	775	4.8	B	$3,990*
DR-Z125L	P	F	805	4.8	B	$4,590*
DR200SE Trojan	P	F	845	12.5	B	$5,790*
DR-Z400E	T	F	935	10	I	$10,890*
RM-Z250	M	F	955	6.3	I	$13,190*
RM-Z450	M	F	955	6.2	P	$14,190*
V-Strom 650XT	A	F	835	20	I	$13,990*
V-Strom 800DE	A	F	855	20	I	$18,590*
V-Strom 1050XT	A	F	850	20	I	$22,990*

SWM

swmmotorcycles.com.au (03) 8362 1600

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
RS300R	E	F	963	7.2	E	$8,590
RS500R	E	F	963	7.2	E	$9,290

THUMPSTAR

thumpstar.com.au (03) 9344 1564

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
TSF-300 N1	E	T	940	9.4	E	$7,499*

TM

www.tmracing-aust.com.au/index.asp 0416 040 230

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
EN300 FI ES	E	T	985	8.5	I	$17,900
EN300 ES	E	T	985	8.5	I	$17,560
EN250 Fi ES	E	T	985	8.5	P	$17,590
EN250 ES	E	T	985	8.5	I	$17,260
EN144 Fi	E	T	990	8.5	I	$16,160
EN125 Fi	E	T	990	8.5	I	$16,160
EN450 Fi	E	F	1000	7.5	P	$18,390
EN300 Fi twin	E	F	970	7.5	P	$18,790
EN250Fi twin	E	F	975	7.5	P	$18,090
MX 85 Junior	M	T	810	6	I	$9,790
MX 85 Full Size 19/21-inch	M	T	990	6	I	$12,390
MX 300 ES	M	T	985	9	P	$14,590
MX 250 ES	M	T	985	9	I	$14,390
MX 144	M	T	990	9	I	$13,490
MX 125	M	T	990	9	I	$13,390
MX 450 FI	M	F	1000	7.5	P	$15,690
MX 300 Fi	M	F	970	7.5	P	$15,790

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	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
MX 250 Fi	M	F	970	7.5	P	$14,890
SMX 85	SM	T	780	6	P	$11,490
SMK 450 Fi ES	SM	F	940	7.5	P	$21,990

TORROT
thumpstar.com.au (03) 9344 1564

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
Motocross One	M	E	550	N/A	B	$4,890
Motocross Two	M	E	640	N/A	B	$4,990
Trial One	T	E	490	N/A	B	$4,890
Trial Two	T	E	550	N/A	B	$4,990

TRIUMPH
triumphmotorcycles.com.au (03) 9381 9765

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
Tiger 900 Rally Pro	A	F	860/80	20	E	$25,950*
Tiger 1200 Rally Pro	A	F	875/95	20	E	$32,490*
Tiger 1200 Rally Explorer	A	F	875/95	30	E	$34,690

YAMAHA
yamaha-motor.com.au (02) 9757 0011

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
PW50	P	T	485	2	B	$2,599*
TT-R50E	P	F	555	3	B	$2,449*
YZ65	M	T	749	6	I	$7,299*
YZ85	M	T	864	5	I	$8,649*
YZ85LW	M	T	904	5	I	$9,049*
TT-R110E	P	F	670	4	B	$3,549*
TT-R125LWE	P	F	775	6	I	$5,599*
AG125	F	F	800	11	I	$4,399*
AG200F	F	F	830	10	I	$6,549*
YZ125	M	T	973	8	I	$11,799*
YZ125X (with lighting kit)	XC	T	973	8	I	$12,499*
TT-R230	P	F	870	8	B	$6,899*
WR250F	E	F	965	7.5	I	$15,899*
WR450F	E	F	965	7.5	I	$17,999*
Ténéré 700	A	F	880	16	I	$20,349*
Super Ténéré	A	F	845	23	E	$26,999*
YZ250	M	T	970	8	P	$13,249*
YZ250X (with lighting kit)	XC	T	970	8	I	$13,749*
YZ250F	M	F	965	7.5	I	$13,949*
YZ250FX (with lighting kit)	XC	F	965	7.5	I	$14,899*
YZ450F	M	F	965	6.2	P	$15,149*
YZ450FX (with lighting kit)	XC	F	965	6.2	P	$15,649*

YCF
www.ycf-riding.com.au (07) 3518 4000

	TYPE	ENGINE	SEAT	FUEL	SKILL	PRICE
50A	P	F	550	2.0	B	$1,999*
50E	P	E	550	N/A	B	$2,499*
Lite F88S	P	F	710	3.8	B	$1,799*
Lite F110	P	F	750	3.8	B	$1,999*
Lite F110R	M	F	750	3.8	I	$2,599*
Start W88E	P	E	720	N/A	B	$2,999*
Start F88SE	P	F	655	3.8	I	$2,399*
Start F110SE	P	F	765	3.8	B	$2,499*
Start F125SE	P	F	765	3.8	I	$2,599*
Start F125E	P	F	765	3.8	I	$2,599*
Pilot F125	P	F	800	3.8	I	$2,799*
Pilot F150	P	F	800	3.8	I	$2,999*
Factory F150 SP2	M	F	810	3.8	E	$3,699*
Factory F190 SP3	M	F	820	3.8	E	$5,299*
BigY 125SEL MX	M	F	810	5.8	F	$2,999*
BigY 150E MX	M	F	880	5.8	I	$3,499*
BigY FD 190 MX	M	F	890	5.8	E	$5,499*
SM F155 Motard	M	F	820	3.8	E	$3,499*
SM FD190 motard	M	F	820	3.8	E	$5499*
Sunday Motors S147	FT	F	680	6.0	I	$3699*
Sunday Motors S187	FT	F	680	6.0	I	$4999*

* Prices marked with an asterisk are rideaway, 'no more to pay'

2025 KTM 300 EXC

The 2025 KTM 300 EXC boasts a 293cc two-stroke engine, Keihin throttle body injection, and a six-speed gearbox designed to stop you from questioning your hillclimb decisions. It weighs just 104.6kg (dry), has 347mm of ground clearance and packs a WP XACT fork and an XPLOR shock, so it's more prepared for hard enduro than your knees are. If you like your bikes light, loud and slightly unhinged, this Austrian missile is worth a look.

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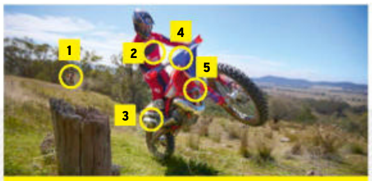


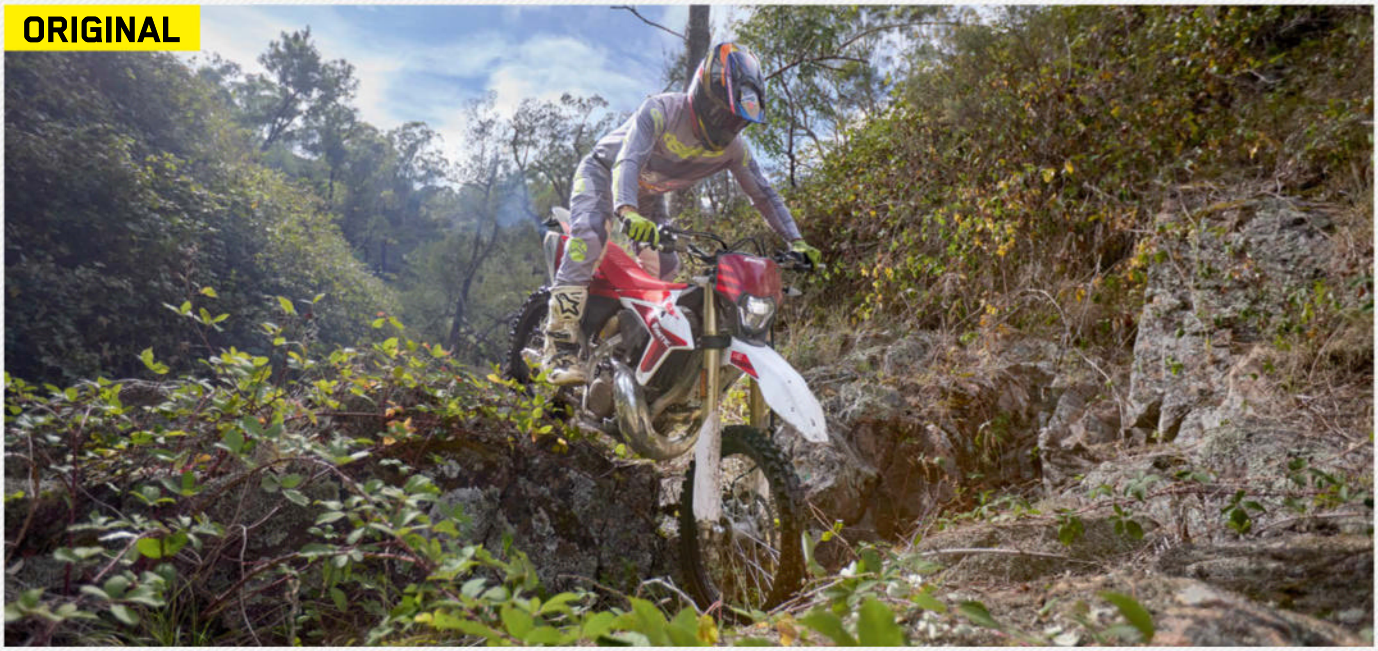
Congratulations
Owen Tidd
You've got a good eye! You won our Spot The Difference competition in issue #549. Hit us up for your prize!

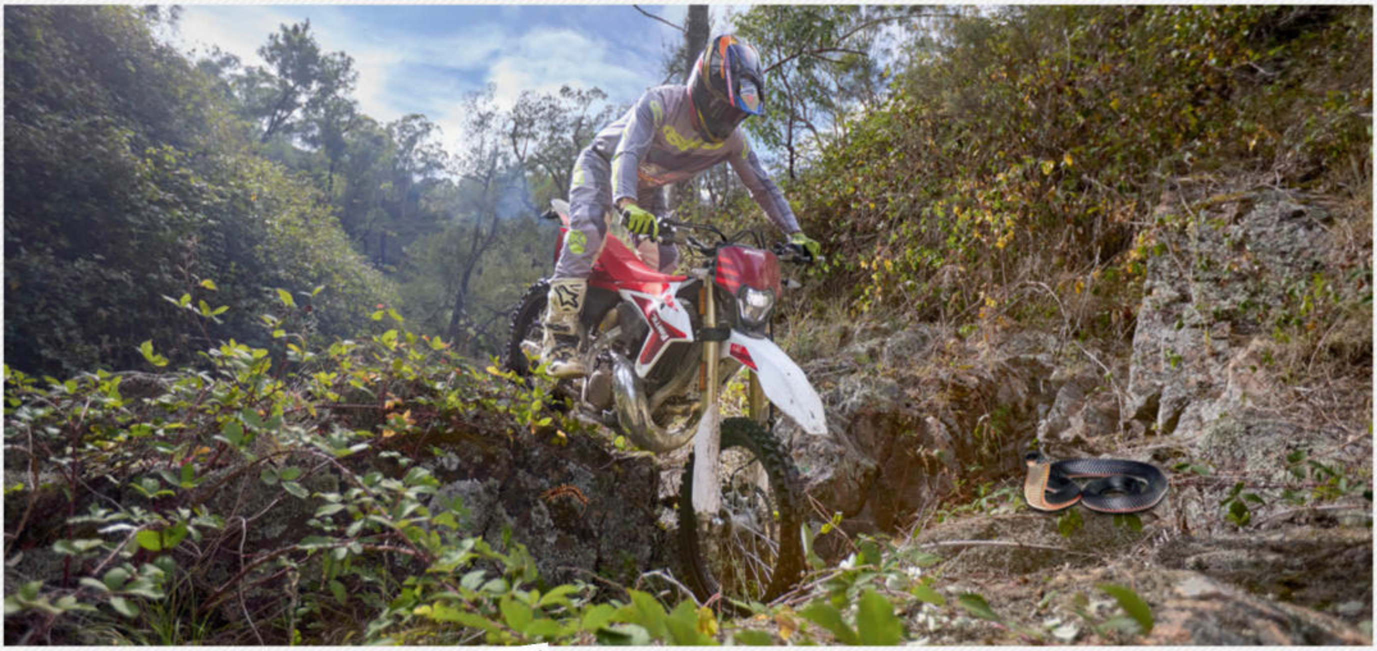
Spot the difference

FIND THE FIVE DIFFERENCES AND WIN!

You may have never heard of Fantic or ever seen one on the trails but they're now finally being imported into Australia so get ready to see more of them! Can you find the differences on this Fantic?

ORIGINAL





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ANSWERS WILL BE REVEALED IN THE NEXT ISSUE

To have your chance to score a great prize, guess the five differences and email your answers to: **adbmag@adbmag.com.au**.
Or, send them direct to our head office: **Spot the difference,**
***Australasian Dirt Bike*,**
PO Box 22, Earlwood, NSW 2206

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